>> Testing.
>> Testing.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Welcome everyone. It is great to see all of you. He will get people another moment or two to join and we will get started. Welcome everyone. Maybe we will wait one more minute. Alright, let's get this going. [Recording in Progress]. Hi everyone, welcome to the organizers forum. It is so good to see you all here. My name is Jessica Lehman, I work as Executive Director of senior and disability action which is a nonprofit community organization in the San Francisco Bay area. I have lead these organizer form calls. I should describe myself before I go on. I am a white woman in my 40s, have shoulder length brown hair, gold hoop earrings, a warm green sweater because it just got called on this coast. My background is a bunch of colorful circles. Alright, so for folks that are new to the organizers forum, it is a monthly call that we do designed to support and expand community organizing and disability communities. We do sometimes a couple calls on the same topic, our format has changed some people's needs and interests. Sometimes we try to do an hour and a half: set of an hour so we have more time to get to the topic. We do a lot of calls looking at intersection malady and how are we building an inclusive, antiracist, anti-oppression disability movement. How are we working in solidarity with other social justice movements. We do a lot of calls about strategies, how do we do this work? Today is one of those calls. For people that are doing this work inside disability groups and inside disability community, and outside. The
topic of hybrid meetings and events is one that people are talking about everywhere in all kinds of spaces. It has become apparent that a lot of folks are looking to the disability community for guidance on what is needed, why and how to make it happened. Before I get more in today's topic, let me do a couple more housekeeping things. We strive to on our collective access in these calls. We all share a responsibility for making the space as accessible as possible. We recognize that there are sometimes conflicting access needs. With the vision, we can all work together with different disabilities and needs. So, we have two ASL interpreters today, I want to apologize to them both publicly for some problems with today and expressed some real gratitude for them being here. We will keep the one interpreter spotlighted at all times. If there is any issue, please speak up or put it in the chat. We also have captioning. If you are not seeing the captions and would like to, go to a generally on the bottom of your screen where you will see more and three dots. You can click show subtitle. If you are on a smart phone, it should look a little different. If it is distracting to you, you can also go to hide subtitle. We want to use the chat minimally because it can be distracting for people who use screen readers. But, it is also a great way for some people to express themselves. I will invite people to put questions and resources in the chat, but we will not use it for a lot of "high" or yes or things that can be distracting. We have everyone muted until be open for discussion which will be about 10:45 to 10:50. I want to ask folks to say muted until then but please put in the chat if there any access needs or other problem that we need to address. Alright, I think that covers it about the organizers forum. We are recording today, we will be sure to share the recording and the transcript later to pass on the people. Somebody Artie asked me if I cannot stay for the whole time, they will have access to this. Alright, today's topic is hybrid meetings and events. I know you are all here because you are interested in this topic and probably challenged like we all are on how to do this well. We will share learnings and best practices on how to make sure we are as accessible as possible and as inclusive as possible by having people participate remotely over zoom or other online platform, and in person and really looking at night is how do we live stream it so someone can watch online and
see what is happening in person, but how do we engage with each other and have it interactive? We know that it is complicated. There are a lot of ideas and technology to use. We are often trying to pull things together without a big budget or a big staff. What do we do to make it work? We have three folks that have agreed to speak today that have a lot of experience in this area. We are eager to hear from them. I have talked to everyone, I think everyone would say that I am not an expert on this yet. Today is also about what challenges are you seeing and let's talk about it together and kind of identify how we can move forward together. So, we have Lisa Cryer who was a death interpreter and educational consultant. We have Itzel Romero, systems change advocate at the Center for Independent living in Berkeley and Peter Estes, my colleague, who is the community resource director at senior disability action. Okay, let me say a little bit more about each person and I will have you give a visual description of yourself and share a little bit about what you do and what kind of hybrid meetings or events you have done so you know where to begin. Then, we will do a panel discussion and here are some questions from all of you. Go ahead and for all of your questions about hybrid meetings and events in the chat then, we will do breakout rooms for a chance to talk to each other a little bit more. Related to this topic, how do we make sure we have remote participation in government meetings? And how do we preserve that? He will do a quick update on that at the end of the meeting. Does that sound good to anyone? Are there any questions or anything I am missing before we move on? Let me introduce our three speakers. Itzel Romero uses she and they. Itzel is at the center for Independent living in Berkeley. Prior to that, she did grassroots organizing in their hometown community and advocated for nature, art and community spaces. Currently, Itzel works to advocate for CIL consumers and the community on issues including housing and Covid equity. So welcome, Itzel. Then we will have Peter Estes who uses he/M. Peter is a senior and disability action. Before that, he organizer on education issues in Washington D.C., his hometown. Now, he manages SDA's team of peer advocates and organizes digital equity and corporate intranet site server service provider accountability through the free Wi-Fi campaign. Then we will hear from Lisa Cryer who uses
they/them. Lisa is an ASL professor and accessibility consultant primarily in education and technology spaces. On that note, I will invite Itzel to get us started on the visual description and little bit of your experience on this topic.

>> ITZEL ROMERO: Hello, my name is Itzel. For a visual description, I am Latina with a long black hair wearing a mask and a black cardigan in front of the white and blue wall. I have done two hybrid meetings, one of them was for a town hall. That one was to get engaged in the community to see what are advocacy priorities should be here at CIL. That was more of a conversation. The second one that we did was more recently. That was with our 50th anniversary summit. That one was in a larger room and had a harder time to make sure everyone was able to hear and listen in to each other.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you, Itzel. Alright, next am going to have Peter introduce himself.

>> PETER ESTES: Hello everyone, this is Peter. For a visual description, I am a white guy with brown hair, there might be some blonde. I wearing a dark blue shirt today, have the blue background on, you can see with shelves and photos in the back. Jessica, I'm so glad you said that, we all feel like we are still learning. We have not an handful of these former program group meetings to midsize ones, we did a small teaching and we had our big annual event is a hybrid event. I'm excited to talk about this with folks.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thanks Peter. Let's bring us all back. Lisa does not seem to be on yet, I am hoping she will join us relatively soon. Apologies, I hope they will join us soon. But with Itzel and Peter, let's go ahead and start talking a little bit more. The first question I wanted to ask you is why do you think it is important to do hybrid events as opposed to just in person or virtual? Either of you can start.

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I can start. I know for a lot of our consumers and for our self, Covid is still a pandemic. Folks should not have to miss an event because they are worried about potentially getting sick. It is super important folks to be able to act as an event. I also know, my family members are not compromised, they live in San Diego. It is difficult for them to support me from a long distance away. One way to make them more accessible is hybrid events. That is family members can join in on that, the people who do not live in California or can I get physically here.
PETER ESTES: It is nice to go second, because Itzel basically said everything, so thank you Itzel. That is it for me too. It is expanding access and ensuring that safety is possible, right? We'll have to make a choice to have one or the other. We can do it will end ensure that we can practice community care. If you are not feeling well, you can make the choice to not show up and still be a full precipitate in a hybrid space. That is an important thing. We don't people to have the pressure on them to show up because they feel so committed to whatever our because our movement is that they can I contribute without being there. Pre-Covid right? This is something we should have been investing in because of the expansion of access we have seen for some the other folks in so many different ways. I think there are lots of important reasons.

JESSICA LEHMAN: People are excited to be back in person. Many people, just to have that human connection. Can you also remind people from an Access point of view, why is it important to not just to a virtual event which might be easier than doing hybrid?

PETER ESTES: Totally, I can jump on that quickly. That is a big piece of our digital organizing, it's organizing around Internet equity with folks who do not have Internet access yet who are not comfortable with the technology or disaster by connection that it will drop out in the middle the meeting. For us, especially on our free Wi-Fi campaign, we have been investing in holding hybrid meetings as a program group for a little bit longer because we really think everyone has to be able to come to that meeting if they want to and if they want to fight for that cause. That is at least one aspect of it for us.

JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you Peter. So I've heard that some groups have, if they are doing a big conference, they might do an online meeting that is totally separate from the in person event so it is a little easier and people have one platform to engage with each other. What do you think about that approach?

ITZEL ROMERO: I will say that the approach that we took, for us to explain little more about how hybrid events have worked, we have used a SmartBoard which is essentially an 80 inch TV that can display a computer screen. They are able to see people are on a zoom meeting. I think it has worked somewhat. Often, the issues that happen with the
online meeting that is separate, the audio doesn't always connect.

>> PETER ESTES: To me, there are pros and cons of having an online only event that is separate from the in person event. It can definitely enable a cleaner event in those spaces. If you just have to focus on one type and are not trying to bridge those spaces, it avoids a lot of the technical problems. But I think on the other side, a lot of our work is about bringing people together and trying to build bonds. As much as we can keep trying to figure out how to bridge those spaces so they feel like unified spaces and we don't feel like we get to them separated for it to work well, that is exciting to me and something that we can keep trying to figure out and do better.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you. It seems to me that we as disabled people are so used to being segregated and separated in various ways, right? We are definitely seeing it right now in terms of the Covid pandemic. There is definitely a lot of feelings that many of us have where you can participate this way, but you only with these people or display, and your only with these people. So, before we move into best practices that you have learned, I am realizing it would be helpful for you each talk a little bit more about the event that you did. I want to ask Itzel to focus on the CIL summit if that works for you and for Peter to focus on SDA's 10th anniversary celebration. You both had a lot of plans Camelot technology. Can you tell us how you set it up to make it hybrid?

>> ITZEL ROMERO: On our summit, we had a SmartBoard. On the SmartBoard, we had a Google meets meeting between our panelists. In terms of folks joining ritually to the summit, there was a separate zoom meeting where they were able to see most of the SmartBoard and most of the panelists who would have been in person. There was a million speaker system to connect the SmartBoard, the in person panelists, and other audio technical stuff. So, I think that set up was definitely very interesting to try and connect to two different audio sources to a zoom meeting. Hearing from those that are joined ritually, they were not always able to hear ritually. That is one critique that I know that people have. I do think that zoom is not always the most accessible.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you Itzel. Can you say a little bit
more about what was the experience for people in the room too how they engage people on zoom and vice versa?

>> ITZEL ROMERO: There was not a lot of engagement between panelists, audience members and zoom audience members unfortunately. If you have joined ritually, while panelists have a question person were audience members can ask questions. If you are on zoom, it is likely that if you put a question in the chat, it would not be seen in terms of who is available to look at the meeting. That is one thing that I wish weather been available to folks were joining ritually.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Full disclosure, I was a panelist for one of the sessions that Itzel and your colleagues did. I was actually out of town. This is an example of how virtual participation and hybrid participation is so important not just for attendees but panelists. Sorry for my coughing today. I was on zoom and Michael panelist was in the room. There was a lot of repeating to make sure that things were accessible. That was one thing that I saw that really worked and moving the camera around as needed or if this person can move over here so we can see each other. I just want to say, it was really impressive to put on an event like that and make it hybrid so thank you to you and your colleagues for making that happen. Peter, tell us about SDA's 10th anniversary celebration and how that work hybrid.

>> PETER ESTES: I will take a shot at it. Jessica, obviously you were there in person. I was holding down the online space, so if you have anything to add or anything that I missed, please fill it in. It was sort of three spaces. We have the online space, indoor space and outdoor space that we were all trying to merge. That was our biggest nut to crack, making sure that is all felt like the same space. For indoor, outdoor, we want to make sure that there was an open door flow through their. Permitting the online to in person, we did a couple of things. We try to make sure that some of the speakers were participating online and some were participating in person. We were working with a really great venue and a really supportive helpful staff help us figure out a lot of this. They had these large TV monitors that they hooked up to zoom for us. We had those feeding into the room so people could see who else was on the zoom, if they were in person. We had it so you could access the computer and chatted people and zoom. How many people
did that? Not that many, but there were a handful of times we had people back and forth there. We had a couple of designated areas where we had the camera streaming so we knew that there would be good footage feeding into the zoom making sure they were capturing what we need them to capture. We had a band that played at the end of the night and they were set up inside. We had more of a program speakers sharing about SDA and some history. They were speaking outside. There were different areas that we are capturing at different points throughout the night. Similarly, we had to change which audio input was feeding into the zoom at least twice. In terms of the challenges that arose, there were definitely some challenges with the audio going from the zoom effectively to the in person space. Mostly the audio coming to the zoom was decent. There were a couple times we had to remind speakers to get closer to the mike. Some people were holding it down at their waste. That is always a challenge. The other thing was the audio from the band. It was more complicated audio. That did not translate quite as well, it's a lot different to pick up that speaker. Even though they were really good and you can still tell that they were really good, it was not quite as crisp. The other thing that we tried to do was make sure that both spaces felt fully programmed. We know that in the in person space, there would be some natural time and people are seeing each other and chatting. We tried to re-create that on the online space as well. We tried to do breakout room conversations, a designated online MC. This is an all staff hands-on affair. I was running tech online and our teammate Ray was hosting the space, we had a different MC guest coming in later. We try to make sure that both spaces felt like the event. It was not one space or the other was the event. The others were watching. We try to make sure it was balanced on both sides.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you so much. Fun to hear about all of those components. I want to ask you each, what is the best practice that you have learned? Feel free to give a couple if you want. What really works that you would recommend to other folks?

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I think if there is any ability to make sure that the experience online and in person is at least somewhat similar. It is definitely not going to be the same, but I know for our town hall, we have the ability to make it a
conversation between everybody that was there who were both in person and online. I think they gave it a more community field in the summit where folks are returning online are definitely not going to have the same experience as in person. That is one thing that I really appreciated about the town hall versus the summit. I think another one is just trying to have the best audio equipment that you can find and access. That tends to be the issue with zoom, or any online format. The audio does not always translate as Peter just mentioned. It is a little much more difficult to get the same experience with audio.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you, that is really helpful. Peter?

>> PETER ESTES: I totally agree. Clearly, the audio piece has been a clear sticking point. It is easier to figure out how to set up the videos, but the audio is a little bit of a changing problem. Different speakers will engage with it differently, it will pick up different types of sounds. Along with that, we really benefit from the advice that we got, that was something special and we were lucky to have. Seeking someone out who you know is familiar with that is a helpful thing to do. A lot of us have members or volunteers in our organization. That way people know someone that does tech theater and finding someone who can think through it with you is helpful if you are not already that person knows all about the audio system. And what Itzel said, going back and forth between the spaces, making sure that the spaces feel like the same meeting is really helpful. The back-and-forth can be challenging, but it is not exactly what you said Itzel, I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. We tried to go back and forth between the spaces so even if it is just exchanging questions in person and online, it is clear that both spaces are valued. Looking for more best practices, obviously, still looking.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Everyone who was spitting, we want to hear your best practices next. I really love what you said Peter about finding somebody who knows somebody who either knows how to do this or can even think through it with you. I remember, Peter and I and handful of others spent a lot of time thinking maybe we can do this or that, like Peter had mentioned, I don't know if we managed to put tape on the floor, but that was the idea. If a speaker stands here, and we have a cell phone on a tripod already set up, the me know how that is going to look on zoom,
right? That way people online can participate. Just being able to think through it ahead of time, even if it is not people who are paid to do it, just to kind of do some brainstorming. That is part of what we are doing today. I will skip ahead a little bit, you both have been talking about the challenges which is great. I want to ask, what kind of tools do you recommend as far as making the audio and video work? You don't have to have all the answers, but be sure what you have used that your events.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: I can start with this one.

>> PETER ESTES: I can start with this one. Microphones are important for the in person space, hearing quality and and making sure it can carry effectively to the zoom. We have at our general meeting used some area microphones that can pickup the ambient sound. Using those is a get someone else's advice if you're not already familiar with that. We have a tool that the jury is a little bit out on, it's owl tool. It's called the meeting owl, it is acute little speaker with a wraparound camera on it. You can have it shoot show a band that is a 360 view of whatever space it is sin, and it can also track speakers and show multiple at a time. For video, it is really great, it will pick up people as they speak. For audio, we have had mixed response. At that teach in, it worked really well, but and some smaller meetings we have had some mixed response from people where one person in the room seemed to be getting the audio picked up really well and one person does not. If you are ever thinking about it, you can get it and they have a return policy. Definitely tested out as much in the situation as you can. We have also worked with other people who love that thing. They love their owl, it might just be us getting used to using it.

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I will echo on the microphone. It is super important for us, at least the panelists and if there is an audience, to hear each other. I think if there is any ability to make all the technology and everything very condensed, and makes it easier for people to hear each other. Especially if you've got a zoom, whoever is using the zoom computer, if it is farther away from the panelist or the SmartBoard, which is what our situation was. It makes it a ton easier to capture the audio on soon zoom. Also, utilizing zoom instead of other platforms seems to be the best option. I think also having captions is a really important tool.
JESSICA LEHMAN: Alright, thank you. I have got news from Lisa Cryer, unfortunately, I'm not even sure where they are turning from, but there is a snowstorm where they are and their Internet is down. They are trying to join, I'm hoping maybe they can join by phone. That is actually not going to work, because they use ASL. We will see if Lisa can join us at some point, if not, you will try to find a way to capture their experiences and share that later as well. Thank you for that and the technology, I'm sure this is an area we will come back to. A lot of what you're talking about takes a lot of planning, takes a lot of different technology. What do people do if they do not have a lot of money or staff? What if you are a community group without a budget and you want to do a hybrid meeting? What would you recommend? Or, is it meaning more places in the community that are set up that people can go use? What do you think? Either of you want to take this one?

ITZEL ROMERO: This is a very difficult question. I think audio and text off is always going to be expensive. However, I will say that if you have the ability to have just a laptop there and a very cheap speaker, it might help. Just to have that audio echo a little more. I will say, I think the less technology you have, the less accessible it is probably going to be. Just because you are not going to be able to get the same audio code visual experience that you would in person. It probably won't be the same experience. I really like the idea of a community space where hybrid events are possible and accessible to anyone who needs to utilize them. That is a beautiful idea.

PETER ESTES: More of those. It is a yes for me Jessica. More of those spaces. Thinking about those that might exist already, a lot of this technology, at least the microphones and projectors, if you want to display a gallery view of people on Zoom, they exist at least in school buildings. If you have a local school near you that you have a relationship with or can build one, that's an interesting venue because they have some kind of space that will work. It comes with a whole set of other complications, but maybe. Then super DIYer I think, you can do a smaller size meeting with the laptop and cell phone camera and having someone join from audio from a phone that can be passed around. That ensures that the audio that is being fed into the zoom is as close to the speaker as possible. Those are probably
the DIYer things that come to mind. I think Jessica is taking
great notes here, maybe we can formulate this into a set of
tips, trips tricks, best practices, likely challenges. The more
we can share and co-create, the more we will learn
together.
>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you to both of you for those
ideas. Making me do a lot of thinking along the way. Folks
should feel free to share questions and the chat. I am
surprised that this is a quiet group without a lot of
questions. There is one question that came in on the
registration form from Alice. Alice says "hybrid meetings
online usually have substantial sound quality problems that
are significant access barriers for me with Matt auditory
processing disability. How can this problem be affordably
solved? Captions are not enough for me and I need Covid
safety." Any ideas on that?
>> ITZEL ROMERO: For us, often our audio issues were
resolved when the microphone was closer to the speaker. If
you're planning a hybrid event or planning for whatever
microphone as close as possible to who was going to be
speaking. I really like Peter's idea of doing from the cell
phone for the audio, that makes a ton of sense. I think just
being as close as possible to insulate the sound as much as
possible. It is not possible to condense that sound and it is
almost like being outside of that point where you are
shooting everywhere and to bounce off of. If you are
planning a hybrid meeting, that can create an issue in
terms of access making the in person event as small as
possible. At least having close proximity to audio is
important.
>> PETER ESTES: I will echo a lot of what Itzel just said. This
is the primary challenge that we have faced. Making sure
the audio quality is as good as possible. Don't need to
reinvent the wheel here. Alice, did you want to add to that?
>> SPEAKER: I will, I would've written a more in-depth
question. Peter and Itzel I'm guessing you do not see the
email which had more details.
>> PETER ESTES: I saw it.
>> SPEAKER: Wonderful. Certainly having the microphone
positioned correctly and the other suggestions can help, I
have been to many hybrid meetings. Many I do not go to,
there are too many disability access barriers for me and it is
too frustrating. There have even been meetings with our
headset microphones which are inaccessible, mainly because of often there are machine noises. Because of my auditory processing disability, they do not only make it difficult for me to hear, they cause and enormous amount of stress. I don't have a formal diagnosis, but the extreme stress seems to be very common from what I've heard about it. Captions, even high-quality captions are not good for me. Two reasons, one I have problems following quickly reading text. The other thing is because of the work and activism, mother things is I am staring at a computer screen all day. Even if I can read it for part of the time, I cannot read it for all of the time. When you think your audio is reasonably good, it is not necessary because people like me are not going to go. I would've loved to gone to the fundraiser, uses important safety things but it was not enough for me. Without extremely high quality sound equipment and an expert sound engineer, it is not accessible to me. I have an idea a better access for everybody. It is important when you mentioned that some folks do not have Internet access or there is a virtual connection that might come out or they don't know how to use technology. There can be a separate participation room for anybody like that would want to be with people. The speakers will be attending virtually. There could be good sound quality equipment in that. At least it will be the speakers and the facilitator. It is so painful not being able to attend because of Covid safety problems and with any public transit requiring masks, even if the meeting does have excellent Covid safety, often cannot get there. These virtual meetings are wonderful with sound quality, a few which are not perfectly accessible from well-funded organizations with excellent equipment, excellent sound and engineers.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you so much Alice, I appreciate hearing from you. I think that is a really interesting recommendation about having the speakers participate virtually then if other people are in person, thank you for that. There is another question in that chat from Brian Shea. AI captions are not nearly as good as CART, but CART is not always available. Are there any affordable fixes? That is a tough question. Itzel or Peter, does anybody else have suggestions? Before I will go first and say I unfortunately do not have any answer to this question. I was not a part of
the team for the summit or a town hall that did captions. I cannot remember off the top of my head will be used, I will leave this question to Peter.

>> PETER ESTES: We have been lucky to set aside funds for CART in our budget for most of our major events, at least. I also don't have a great example. I would wonder whether there are folks were learning captioning would be interesting in it as experience and connecting with some of those. We have worked with groups that are given discount to nonprofits or small organizations or sliding scale, I'm sure you have asked about that old into that. Always worth it. I wish I had a better answer. That is a good question.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: This is also making me think, how do we make sure that resources are available? This is going back to philanthropy and making sure what are you doing on captioning or interpreting? Can they be doing more to require and make sure there's a budget line in every organization's budget that they approve or it is a separate grant? I can keep going obviously. We are at 10:54. Instead of breakout groups, I am going to propose, we have a couple of the ideas in the chat that I want to hear about your. Let's do some sharing on what can work. Please correct me if I mispronounce everyone's name.

>> SPEAKER: That is the closest anyone has gotten to that. I answered the question in the chat about captioning. We have been using a $20 a month plug-in called REV. It is not only been superior to Google and zooms captioning which is God awful, we had an event a couple of weeks ago where we had total access which is supposed be one of the better captioning services. It was nowhere near as accurate as REV was. REV is a two dollar a month at on. We are not about the organization at all, but we do find the funding for that and recommended to anybody.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: That is AI? Automatic captions?

>> SPEAKER: Yes. They have a free demo period if you want to check it out.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: That is good to know, thank you. Blaise from New York said check with the virtual audience. That is an important reminder because we have to allow space for ourselves and each other that will not be perfect. We will check in and make changes along the way. How many of us have been at a recent meeting, not just early zoom meetings early on in the pandemic where you are on mute,
now it is the whole TV screen is on mute or one side is cut off and we can fix it, we just have to tell each other. Brooke asks, any advice about small interactive meetings with breakout groups with hybrid participation? That is a great question. Do you want to say more about what you have found? Do you have ideas or challenges?

>> SPEAKER: I am not sure how my sound is with the mask and the big space. I have ideas that have not tried. I am interested to hear what other people have tried. There's often hesitancy to try new things because you don't want to screw the meeting up. This is an ongoing challenge. Finding the time to test things is also hard. One thing I've wondered is about whether you can have a phone or an iPad in the small group that is one of the virtual participants so you could have the full and in person, like is an avatar for the person or the phone, I like the idea of using the phone. That is a lot less complicated than setting up an iPad. My other experience was that once we had a critical mass, vis-à-vis the in person folks, we had a separate virtual small group. There was one virtual small group and two in person small groups. I am really interested to try and come up with ways that even a small group experience can be hybrid. One other thing that helps that I learned from an article I read somewhere was, this really only works in a team what people already know each other, but I assigned buddies. Each virtual person had a body who was an in person at the meeting. For example, there was an activity and the virtual person, instead of having a paper online, we use the paper in the real-life space and the people who were virtual would tell their buddy what they wanted to write. The body was doing their own stuff and the virtual person stuff.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: I love those ideas and solutions.

>> PETER ESTES: I feel like you are answering your own questions for us and it is helpful to us. I wish I had more experience trying what you are saying. That is really good idea. Mostly what we have ended up doing is we have a critical mass of people online and in person. There will be breakout groups online and in person, but I like the idea of merging the spaces and for certain events, I can work really well. Probably phone is easier. I have a problem at least.

>> SPEAKER: I apologize at our previous schedule thing I've to go through now swept to leave early. I wanted to thank you for letting me join this amazing space, I have learned a
lot from the session, thank you.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you, good to have you. Golzar, another set out to another SDA person. In my experience in having multiple - - a lot of audio feedback. There's a capacity to going to multiple physical rooms for the breakout, that is helpful. Similarly, Alice was commenting that the separate breakout room was more accessible with audio processing. Passing a phone around its background noise. I am remembering, I was in an event that met our fund based in San Francisco, they have a community room and I want to talk to them about what they consider setting up some good hybrid technology and advertising. They have a number of small conference rooms and for breakout, I was online and some people were in person. They did it pretty seamlessly, data TV set up and desired technology. They had the TV set up and the tech person who would make sure to put the right person in the zoom breakout room so I would show up in the room with the in person people, if that makes sense. What else? Here is another. Do you want me to share this out loud or read it?

>> SPEAKER: I can share it out loud. One tip I have heard is that practice meeting hybrid, for us it will probably look like having some folks that we know really well and have a gathering that will be a little more social. We can see how it is extracted technology and do that at least once the do our annual meeting hybrid.

>> PETER ESTES: I would echo that and say that we have been grateful for the grace that people have given us. Part of that has been the framing. Especially when you are in a meeting of SDA members, a lot of people have been willing to be on the experiment will journey because we know that it is worth in the end. Part of it has been that we are continuing to try to narrate that. We are all on this learning journey together. There will be bumps in the road, but keep pointing them out and you will learn about them together.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Somebody was saying that today's meeting should have been hybrid if we are talking about hybrid advance. Next time we will do that, that's an interesting idea for December. He will talk about that later. What other recommendations do you folks have or what problems have you seen? Blaise, go ahead. We cannot hear you. Still no. Okay Blaise, let us know if you work that out. We will leave you spotlight for a second. In the meantime,
does anybody else have a recommendation, a comment or a question? There you are, go ahead Blaise. Blaise, are you there? Okay, soon we will get Blaise. Let's talk a little bit about accessibility. We have all done a lot of work on disability in person and disability online. What do you do to maximize excitability in the hybrid meeting? You can repeat on some of these things that you have already covered.

>> PETER ESTES: I think we have touched on a handful of them. High-quality captioning, it is really important. It is great to know about this REV tool, interested to try it. And ASL. We have been thinking a lot more about making sure to record our meetings and ensure that there is access to posterity. Having ASL interpretation is important to us and captions. Likewise, if you enable the feature in zoom and turn it on, we will record interpretation in multiple languages. If you work with interpreters regularly, that is an exciting development. It is pretty recent for understanding. These are all things that cost, but we have found them to be very beneficial and important. There's also the simple an important reminder earlier, ask people how it sounds and be willing to pause and take the time to adjust those issues as much as you can. If you are using microphones in person, remind them how to hold them, where to hold them, or hold them for people. Whatever is easier.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Great, thank you. Itzel, anything to add to that?

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I will echo everything that Peter said and also add that often times people have conflicting access needs. That can limit accessibility for some people and allow accessibility for others. It is not always a solution for some folks.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Yes, thank you for that. What do you two or other people in the room, do you want your captioner, ASL interpreters or other language interpreters to be in person or on zoom or other virtual platform?

>> SPEAKER: This is Blaise, is this working now?

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Yes, can you hold on one second?

>> SPEAKER: Yes, I just wanted to make sure that this worked because of the new headset that I am used to.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Yes, thank you. I just want to hear from Itzel and Peter on where you want interpreters and captioner's, and you will go to Blaise.

>> PETER ESTES: I am curious to hear your thoughts on this,
Itzel. At this moment in time, it has been helpful for us to have the interpreters and captioner's online. It is a little bit easier for us so far to set someone up and person with a cell phone that feeds into the correct interpretation for them than it has been to make sure that the interpreters audio from in person is high-quality enough to feed it to the zoom. Similarly for ASL, it has been a little easier to spotlight someone they do have another video feed to set up at the event that is dedicated. That can be different depending on different contexts, so far that has been my experience.

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I definitely agree with all of that. It is made it easy for us to figure out where to put interpreters with the registration link and making sure that there is a spot for people to request their access needs and specifically interpretation and what language interpretation that they needed. Making sure that they were detailing whether or not they will be for joining virtually or in person. That helped us figure out that maybe we will need a Spanish interpreter and person, but ASL is easier if it is online.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you, so much. This will all make us get even better at planning. Okay, Blaise, you are up.

>> SPEAKER: Okay, great. Thank you for allowing me to be in the space. A couple of things to consider is, I really like the idea of having either a USB microphone or a USB soundboard that you can plug in the computer and plug microphones into them. That way, you can run your own AV if you do not have the budget to hire an AV person and plug in a pair of headphones and monitor that stuff. I do a bit of podcasting, so that is something I tend to be pretty comfortable with. Plus, you've got that direct audio source going into the computer. If you are plugging in the external microphone, the chances are that the audio will be significantly better. I cannot agree with you Peter enough about the microphone coaching piece of it. That is just so critical to everyone that is using a microphone.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you, Blaise. Itzel or Peter, do you want to comment on that?

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I can definitely agree with the microphone coaching piece, that is super important. Some people talk really fast, some people talk really slow. It can be very difficult for a microphone to pick up if you are talking too slow or too fast, or you are too close or too far
away.

>> PETER ESTES: Agreed. That is a really helpful comment, Blaise. I like the idea of experiencing with USB microphones if you don't have a space where they will provide you microphones. That certainly seems like a potentially great way to increase the sound quality or audio quality.

>> JESSICA LEHMAN: I love that, that is great. Alice put in the chat that there is a discussion on the disability visibility project called why I won't be organizing any in person fundraising events for the foreseeable future. There are concerns that some hybrid events create two tiers and there is a lesser event for high-risk people. I think it is a great example of converting access needs and why we are here as the people that cannot participate have a good experience online because of technology or various issues. Alice, I will call on you right now but I really appreciate your comments. Shaya is up next.

>> SPEAKER: I had the question related to Alice point about what people have seen to try and replicate some of the in person and formal conversation? One thing I wondered about but have never seen done is that zoom has the option where you can pick which breakout room you can go into. In theory, if you are friends with someone and they are going to a breakout room, you can join that breakout room too. I'm curious if anyone has seen anything they can replicate?

>> PETER ESTES: What we have mostly done is group breakout rooms. That is something that we were interested in trying to figure out for our anniversary event and it was one of the pieces that did not make it. Partially because it would've required more for the size of the event, it would have required more computers for people to join from the event that we had. I really like that idea. That is an informal off-the-cuff socializing. It's one of the biggest differentiators between in person space and hybrid space. People will do informal socializing when joining zoom, but that is everyone talking over everyone at once which is not always the most pleasant experience. It is so nice to have people connecting but I wish I had a better answer. It's a good thing to try and figure out.

>> ITZEL ROMERO: I will echo that, having smaller breakout rooms is important. One thing I have seen in mostly online events is having like a random breakout room with
someone that you have never met before. Where you are talking to someone where you have never met before so getting to meet someone new, that way it is possible to grow smaller breakout room.
>> JESSICA LEHMAN: Thank you, I love those ideas. Peter, stop me, I do not want to repeat what you said, but you reminded me in planning our fundraiser, we were thinking about having someone walk around with the computer and kind of interview someone in person. Just a way of having a different kind of engagement. It was just too much to do, but something I would like to try in the future. If you people online in a breakout room, it is a small number, we see someone in person where there is this novelty. Ideally they will say what is happening over here too what do I see behind you? Tell me about this or that. One idea that we at SDA have not tried yet. Another quick thought I have on this is too much time to think about who you can plant in certain places. Find the chatty people were going to want to talk to whoever is around. Ask them to start chatting. It is at first step sometimes that will get things going. Alright, how is it already 11:17? So there is clearly a lot of work to be done. I am now envisioning, if this already exists then somebody please speak up. I would love to start putting together a guide and hybrid events. Maybe not even a guide yet, just here is what we are learning to be able to get all this in one place to be able to share it. Maybe a Google document. Does anybody know about something like that that may exist already? Is anyone interested in helping develop something like that? Seeing a couple of nods. I will ask folks to put in the chat, say I am interested in helping. Peter is setting an example, I did not plant him, I promise. Maybe I did, I invited him to speak. Anyone else was interested? Maybe if you feel like you have a lot of experience or time, maybe put your email and the chat as well or send me an individual chat so I can email folks and we can follow up on that. Partly in that too, we can do some brainstorming on what do we need from the broader community? Is it making community spaces accessible or available? Is he making funding available? Who knows, I'm sure there are a lot of ideas. I want to talk very briefly about remote participation. This is all about making sure that people can participate in multiple ways. We know most government meetings went online at city, county, state and federal levels where there is
online or public comment. There were commissioners or elected representatives who were able to participate remotely. Now, people are saying we can meet in person so we want to get rid of that. One thing we are hearing in San Francisco is this concern that it gets too long when you allow people to call in for public comments. There is a concern about people calling from outside of San Francisco to weigh in on San Francisco topics. I think it is easier for people to precipitate and share comment that way, so it just longer. Yes, there is more that the supervisors have to listen to when they are in a hearing. So what is happening same discovery now is there is legislation that was introduced to and public comment, to make it so we can only come in person. Also groups of working people and parents, and youth and all kinds of people who have trouble going in person to a long meeting on wanting to fight to keep remote participation. We talked about this at an organizers form a few months ago. I want to invite other people to share what is happening in your city, county or state? Are you having to fight to keep remote participation? Blaise, go ahead. Oh no, we cannot hear you again. Well Blaise works on that, I will ask people to say either yes, or raise your hand or put a yes in the chat if your city or county currently has a remote option for participating in public meetings. I see some nods. Say yes or not if they are talking about ending it or if you have heard anything about that. This may be one of the funny times where the severance co-pay area that claims it is so progressive, is leading the way in ending remote public comments. Most of New York City has it, some have ended it. Okay, let me ask folks to say yes again in whatever way works for you, if you want to make sure that we keep remote participation in public meetings. This is something we need to revisit. How are we fighting together for it? The reason I wanted to bring getting very briefly today was because it seems like there is a connection and how we are educating the public, how we are educating community groups and government about the importance of having different ways to participate and make things fully accessible. I am seeing in the chat that remote part of the patient is important, we need virtual equity for meetings. Thank you for that. I will ask for a final comment from Peter and Itzel if there's anything that we have missed or anything you want to lead people with or anything that you want to
repeat that feels particularly interesting or important to you. I mentioned, sometimes we do two months on the same topic, I will propose that we come back in December. If our speakers cannot come back, that is okay. Some of you may not be able to, but to continue this conversation among disability community members about how do we develop this guide for hybrid meetings. Maybe we can get a start and shared that and do more work at the next meeting.