

StreamBox

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CHS City of Waterloo

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>> Mellow everyone it is Ryan from CNIB, we are just holding off, about five more minutes until we start but if you can hear me you joined correctly. So hang tight and we will be with you shortly. Thanks for attending.

>> Hey guys Ryan, this is great seeing our numbers rise. It is good, just waiting about five minutes until we begin.

>> Hey guys it is Ryan, I just noticed we climbed quite a few there. A lot of people have joined in, that's great. We are just waiting a few more minutes then I'm going to hit the record button and you'll get a verbal notification and/or pop up on your screen. Once we do that, that will signal the start of the Webinar. But thanks for attending. All right just final check in with our panelists, everyone is good? (recording: this meeting is being recorded)

>> Marina Dotzert: Hello and welcome to day two of our five-day Webinar series called Life Made Accessible in honour of National AccessAbility Week, which takes place from May 31 to June 6. National accessible week is a time when accessibility and inclusion are promoted across communities and workplaces. And a time to celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities. It is an opportunity to recognise the efforts of Canadians who are actively removing barriers and ensuring persons with disabilities have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of Canadian society. My name is Marina Dotzert, I work for the City of Kitchener and [speaker off mic] coordinator and today I'm your host. Our event, Life Made Accessible is an opportunity to see and being presented to you. By listening and by listening, asking and learning we hope we will give you a better understanding of the path some individuals with disabilities need to take. With understanding (crackly) world more accessible. Today's Webinar, look at the connections between mental health, disability and COVID-19. Before we begin I would like to mention that this event is an opportunity to listen, ask and learn. Our panelists will be sharing personal experiences and perspectives. This is their story, they do not speak on behalf of all individuals living with disabilities. We encourage you to comment and ask questions to our panelists throughout the Webinar using the Q and A option at the bottom of your screen. The last 10 to 15 minutes of our time together will be dedicated to answering questions. Please remember to be appropriate and courteous. Video relay interpreters are available for this event, please change your view to gallery view to see them. Captioning is also available, which you can select at the bottom of your screen. A very big thank you to the City of Waterloo and City of Kitchener for sponsoring our interpreters, captioning and transcription services for today. If you are using

a computer with a screen reader you can navigate to your weak far options using the tab key. If you are joining us from an iPhone app using voiceover your Webinar options are along the bottom of the screen. To activate the buttons, use a single finger double tap. To begin I would like to introduce your moderator for today, Carmen Sutherland. Carmen wears many hats, one of them is at Waterloo region family network where she is the [Name?] coordinator and other, sorry Bridges to Belonging as community relations. Another amazing -- about Carmen, she loves food. She gets sincere food talking about food and looking at picture fs food which is why I enjoy her. Over to you Carmen.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Thank you Marina and welcome everyone, for discussion. COVID-19 has affected every aspect of many individuals who are living with disability experiencing isolation is not a new phenomenon. Our guest speakers will discuss mental health and share the tools they use to deal with isolation and loneliness. They will discuss how we are Aiden adapting to the quote/unquote new norm, society that embraces technology and barrier free design to enable full participation for people from all walks of life. Before we dive into the topic I would like to introduce our guests. We have Bonnie Taylor who is a psychotherapist and owner of Bonnie Taylor Counseling in Waterloo, Bonnie has worked in the field of mental health and disabilities for over 20 years. Bonnie provides therapy to children, youth and adults, experiencing a range of mental health, physical and developmental needs. Bonnie lives on a farm outside of Waterloo and enjoys spending time outside with her farm animals, being in the garden, going out on nature walks and photography. We also have in a Dean Vertes, she is a social worker who is blind. She loves helping people who are in crisis and she herself does very well dealing with hard situations in her own life. Her interest in music, skiing and spirituality family and friends also play an important role in her life. Finally we have Amy Mathers who is born with a genitoif I can metabolic disorder that has caused a lifetime of dealing with chronic illness, life threat evening illness and disability. She and her sister wrote and taught a course called assisting families dealing with chronic illness, teaching others about the experience, with illness from different perspectives. She loves to crochet and is catching up with her reading during the COVID-19 quarantine. Welcome and thank you for being here. So I thought we would just start by having all of our panelists tell us about how COVID-19 has affected your life and maybe in particular your mental health and as well as those you work with. So who would like to begin? Bonnie would you like to start?

>> Bonnie Taylor: Sure, yeah. And thank you so much for the warm welcome Carmen, much appreciated so glad to be here today as well. I as I mentioned have my own private practise in Waterloo and by serving people in my office face-to-face, that is the way I've been primarily offering counseling services. So March 16th was my last day in the office seeing people face-to-face, who would of thought that would be looking back on, I thought in that moment it would be okay for a few weeks I'll figure something out. And here I am learning instantly a new system of delivering therapy services. My priority being I want to ensure that any client that I've been working with is still feeling supported during this time. As I am trying to navigate how to do video conferencing, I had never even done a video call with my friends before. So that was new for me and very stressful. But also many of the clients that I work with, some were hesitant to try this new method of counseling, some felt that well it wouldn't be the same, it just I think a lot of people thought I'll just wait until you come back in the office. For those that did give it a try, we

were all learning it together and what a different experience working with your therapist who is also trying to figure out, can you hear me, can you see me, like how many times do we all say that in a day and trying to navigate our computer glitches and figuring out is Zoom better than Skype or what not. So lots of learning, lots of challenges that way for me professionally, but also just a change in ways I'm able to offer mental health support personally I live in a rural community and our Internet is not as fast as it would be high speed in the city. My husband, who was also now changing his work to work at home online we navigate together because we both cannot be on the Internet at the same time. So not even checking e-mail, before this Webinar I just ran downstairs and wrote a note please do not turn on the computer at all during this. So lots of, lots of challenges, but um one experience that many therapists have never had before where every single individual I'm working with, regardless of their age, we're all impacted by the social isolation, we're all impacted by fear and worry about our own personal health and safety.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Thank you so much Bonnie. Nadine would you like to share?

>> Nadine Vertes: Sure, thanks for having me, I'm really honoured to be here. I, when I first heard about COVID-19 [audio cut out] I heard about a few cases um travel, then you know the news is progressing and everybody is being told to stay home and are learning this is really happening and then that this is um, so I work with those who, essential worker for that part of my life is somewhat normal, I wear lots of hats and I go to work when I'm scheduled. And so that's very helpful to me in this time. For me the challenge is things, acquiring items. So who is going to help me do that, right. That's I'm sure a lot of people so able to go and go grocery shopping and go shopping and others who are not able to go may not have those supports in the community. So I know that has program, if you contact the [audio cut out] will be able to assist you with a mate who will be able to assist you in obtaining groceries and then also um on a personal level so they would chat with you every week. So that, that might be helpful to those who need it, who don't have a lot of support during this time. I think need to do, remind us all physically connected we can still be emotionally connected so reach out to people that you haven't reached out to in a long time. I try to stay grounded, I read a lot of books. I call my, meditation is helpful to me, yoga, there is a website called blind alive that has, very well described. So if you are missing out on your exercise routine you can access that as well. Also in terms of going to the bank, people are pretty kind and are helpful. I can't really social distance very, so if you want me to stand somewhere you have to tell me where but I still pin pad in the store. Most people are, are helpful in that respect. So that's, I think my main, my main point is we need to make, sorry these exceptions um can't social distance.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Thank you so much. Amy, would you like to share now?

>> Amy Mathers: Um, I would say in many ways um COVID-19 and the pandemic has been a mixed bag. So a lot of it is isolation, which I'm used to because when it is winter and the snow is high I can't get out in my wheelchair anyway, so I am stuck in my place. Despite still being isolated now obviously it is not snow, it is the worry of contracting COVID-19 um there is still things that have opened up for me instead. So as Bonnie was saying about video chats with psychotherapy, yeah I get that now. So I can see my psychiatrist who lives in Toronto who practise is in Toronto more often because I don't have to make the effort to get there. Which is quite the effort. And then things like all these things going online, like this panel and the

symphony has new stuff online and [Name?] theatre has stuff online and so where it was physically difficult for me to get to things before now I can my home and it is a nice surprise. I mean I do wish this thing companies had thought of earlier before the quarantine and pandemic, but I understand why it is like this. And personally I deal with anxiety, I have been diagnosed with depression and those things have obviously not improved during the quarantine. So I do have things that I do, but I also I think it is very important to keep on top of your mental health while this is going on.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Thank you so much Amy. I guess the next thing I thought we could talk about is, is anything in particular that you would like to again asthma Arena said at the beginning, all of us are individuals, so we cannot speak for any whole community. But are there things that you would like to share perhaps about people with disabilities in general during this period and particularly in terms of mental health or possible, you feel like this experience is drawing people's focus towards mental health? Does anyone have any thoughts they would like to share about that?

>> Nadine Vertes: I think it is drawing people, we are all in this experience of mental health right now, ups and downs and so the mental health has done a very good job on examining -- people health. So for example there is [audio cut out] which anyone can call and access mental health support. There is also um is a mental health line for those who work in health care or experiencing mental health at this time.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Oh Bonnie do you want to go first?

>> Bonnie Taylor: Go ahead Amy.

>> Amy Mathers: I would say in some ways yes and some ways no. So yes for first responders, medical staff, regular people, yes. There is a greater focus on mental health than there was before, for sure. But I do find personally as a patient, as someone in kidney failure there is also a gap because I have to go into the hospital to get my treatment and dialysis three times a week, which means even though there is all this stuff about avoiding hospitals, only go there if you have to, this is a fear and risk that I have to face on a, well three times a week and then also I have to do other appointments where I go to Toronto to visit the bigger hospital. And I find it extremely anxiety provoking. But I don't feel that there is a great amount of support for people like me maybe I'm just not aware of it. But I, I also know that from having to go to Toronto that even though, for my physical and emotional well-being I need someone to push my wheelchair to take me to a test. If you get the wrong person at the screening booth you are not going to be allowed to. It is that inconsistency that you are always trying to navigate that can totally increase your anxiety.

>> Carmen Sutherland: That absolutely makes sense and I really think that I really think Amy that you are, that you are willing to share that experience with us. As someone who does need to go to the hospital on a regular basis, because not everyone would be having that experience right now. So I really thank you that you are willing to open up about what that experience is like and how it makes you feel. I thought the next thing we might address, Bonnie or anyone, if you want to share some strategies for managing mental health during this time.

>> Sure I would be happy to go ahead. One thing that we have to keep in mind is when we often hear the term mental health we think that means someone has a mental health issue or mental health diagnosis. And we really need to keep focusing on mental wellness and keeping

ourselves mentally well, physically well, all of that really contributes to our overall health. And it's especially important now more than ever. People are hearing it from the government officials that are on, on TV, on the radio. I'm hearing more about the importance of mental health and how many people are impacted by mental health right now during COVID. As a psychotherapist and because I have been working in the field for many years with people of all ages, this isn't new. Mental health issues are not new. Social isolation isn't new. So let's take all of that that's already been there, we're bringing it to the forefront which is so important to really acknowledge for individuals that maybe didn't think about it as much because mental health really, I mean it is starting to come out more and more, people are feeling more comfortable in sharing that they've experienced depression or what not. Now it's also important to recognise how you can keep mentally well. One of the things that is so important is even just looking at our own personal care. I have heard so many people say to me, I'm glad it is a phone appointment because I haven't got out of my pajamas all day and my recommendation is, you know, don't wear your pajamas all day. I saw funny meme online that said, you know, bedtime means it is time to change from my day time pajamas, to my nighttime pajamas, so even think of being at home we want to be comfortable, we don't want to get too dressed up but also wear something a little different every day. Change your clothes, have a shower, please your family and friends will thank me. Thank you for me saying that. Recognise our own hygiene. Taking care of ourselves physically is something that I've heard a lot of people aren't really doing as much of. I asked people every time I talk to them, when was the last time you went outside. Now that you have nice weather it is easier to even just outside. Get some fresh air. I heard a variety of people say couple times a week, maybe. I'm not talking about individuals who are not able to physically get outside on their own, I'm talking about individuals who can. So recognizing what you need to do and if you need supports to get outside, to get some fresh air, to connect noises, the sounds, what Nadine was saying, doing the grounding. Mindfulness is something that everyone can really pay attention to and it is really looking at what your five senses are. Taking a moment away from the computer, we are on the computer all the time now and it is important to get away from it. And even if you can get outside think of what can you hear, what can you see, what can you taste, what can you touch? Like what can you smell? All five of our senses and really get in tune with those things. That just helps ground us. And again, as I said, get away from the computer as I say this staring at the computer, [LAUGHTER] but people are on the computer, kids are on it all day for school. On work, all on it, to eggs socialize and feel we are not physically alone but there is still time that is really needed to have a break. Give our eyes a break, when we are doing video calls we are staring in someone spot all the time. If we are reading online, at least our eyes are moving or hearing different things. Getting books that Nadine and like just even doing some reading, listen to some music. I talked to somebody the other day, I said when was the last time you just listened to music, have a little dance party at home if you need to. Belt out some of those live theatres that they are putting out there for us. But to hear about self care and that is very important. Self compassion is so critical. It is always humbling when I ask somebody how long have you been on social media today and they, okay I'll check and oh three hours, six hours, eight hours. Social media can be a source of connection, but it can also be a source of stress. So those are some things I just really connecting with what did you enjoy doing, what made you feel good before COVID came into our lives and how can

we tap into that a little bit now?

>> Carmen Sutherland: Bonnie, that is so helpful. One thing I would, about when you were speaking is if you don't really have a response to this, that's fine, but I was just thinking about how in my life, with the people that are surrounding me, because due to my physical needs I am seeing several people a week, there is a variety of different reactants to this whole situation. I have some people that are, that are literally eating up all the -- COVID-19, I have some people who don't want to talk about it at all, be aware and being safe and I have all sorts of things in between that. I don't know if you have any comments about what you've seen or to navigate that in particular, if you don't that's fine. That was just a question I thought of while you were speaking or anyone else.

>> Bonnie Taylor: Yeah I would be happy to answer that, I have heard the same thing Carmen as I am talking to people of all ages through my private practise as well as some of my friends, I do get different messages. Because I live in the rural area I was actually starting to think that maybe life does exist as normal out in the city [LAUGHTER] because some individuals are telling me, oh yeah I went grocery shopping, I've been here, I've been there. I went to visit friends, went out and I thought okay I really haven't done any of those things myself. I do have asthma and on a good day if I catch a cold instantly becomes, pneumonia forming. So I'm already normally hesitant to get sick, nobody wants to get sick. But it just seems to impact me a little bit more than some others. So I'm intentionally not going out to these places and in turn my husband is also very much physical distancing too because he doesn't want to bring anything home and share it with me. So he is very caution too of where he comes and goes. But I know myself the other day, I think I started to experience a little bit of freedom envy for some of those individuals that, oh I was out here, I was out there. Oh if I get sick, I get sick. And um yeah it is, it's a challenge because who is right, who is wrong? I don't know we are all figuring this out as we go along. But it, I wonder what other people's experiences are too from what they are hearing.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Thank you Bonnie, Nadine and Amy, do you have any other comments about either strategies in terms of mental health in terms of this time or conversations that we were just having a little bit about different reactions.

>> Nadine Vertes: I like what Carmen is saying in terms of establishing routine. I think and realizing the normalcy that we don't have.

>> Right.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Nadine, did you, you've definitely shared some already but did you or anyone else want to share about some resources that you know that people could reach out to you during this time if they wanted.

>> Nadine Vertes: Okay I'm not going to wrap a bunch of numbers but if you call 211 they will be able to give you stress centres and crisis lines and depending, I know there are lines for elderly folks, there are lines for just in distress an need to and also lines for people in crisis as well. Would be 211 and ask the person assisting you about your needs and they will be able to link you to the right line to call.

>> Carmen Sutherland: That's wonderful, thank you Nadine. Does anyone else have anything they want to share in terms of, go ahead Amy.

>> Amy Mathers: Yes I am a big fan of the reading, like I love to read of course but I also find

that when I'm anxious it works on more than one level so it calms me down like my physical body and then it also distracted me and my mind away into a story. I know right now some people are having a lot of trouble reading to just sit there and concentrate and keep your mind on the story is a big challenge because there is so much going on around us. But for those people I would recommend audio book because that can just sweep you up as well and without having to stare at a page and try to make your way through it, I've enjoyed it myself, I know Nadine you enjoy them. There is some really great ones out there. So if you are having trouble reading but you need that relaxation and break, then that's what I would say. Go to an audio book. And then the other thing I do I have a bullet journal. So to keep things from just seeming like they are the same day after day, I try to just put something in there, be creative because being creative is something that gives me hope. And helps me cope with everything. So those are my suggestions.

>> Those are excellent. I love that so much. Bonnie not to put you on the spot again, but another thing that I was thinking when you were, when you were talking um is I know for me and I don't want you to assume anything about anyone else, but I know for me while I do have my Personal Support Workers coming I don't have a partner and I don't have any children either. So I don't know if you have some strategies for people who might be living with other people right now or more than one person or not by themselves. I don't know if you have any particular strategies that might go with that situation. If you don't that's okay, because I didn't prep you for that question.

>> Thanks, it is interesting because we didn't talk about the social isolation, which is absolutely very difficult for individuals living literally in isolation, by themselves without anybody there with them. I don't know what we should call the opposite of social isolation because I also work with individuals that have a whole house full of people. I heard from teens in particular it is hard for them to find anywhere that is peace and quiet that they don't have anyone knocking on their door. Some kids share rooms with a sibling and they are all together all the time. And I had one team say, you know what, normally I don't see my family that much because we are out at extra curriculars, at sports. They are always on the run and they could never even find one night a week to eat dinner together. Now they are eating almost all of their meals together and, you know, sometimes it is a little bit too much time together. It's interesting because families are finding a new way to relate to each other. Normally when parents will come up home at the end of the day, kids have been in school all day, parents have been at work, everybody has been socializing with someone else in their lives. And now well they are trying to figure out how can I, as a parent, find a quiet space to actually work? We assume when we are hearing people work from home that we all have these wonderful home offices, that it is are set up, ready to go, proper technology, proper ergonomic support and that's not the case. So that's just talking about adults trying to find a quiet corner to do their jobs because they have to as they need to get paid. But then they have kids that are trying to also learn online and remembering passwords to log into each site and there is that push and pull. My advice is don't feel that you have to work 100% as well you did prior to this. And that goes back to what I said earlier with importance of self compassion, we aren't going to be doing our jobs as well as we did before this happened. We don't have the equipment and technology. We also normally don't have a whole house full of people trying to do their jobs too. So it is prioritizing what needs to get

done. I have had many conversations with adults who are trying to parent and work and what they've done is negotiate with their employers, can I switch my workday. 9 to 5 is not working for me right now. I'm an early riser, start my day at 6 am and finish at 2. And maybe can I do some work between 9 and midnight because that's when everybody has gone to bed. So my message is also to employers to have some flexibility in the workday because there might be times it is absolutely critical to have contact with your employees, but then it is also okay for them to step away. Because they need to be able to connect with their kids. The word guilty has been coming up so much from parents and it is hard because trying to do everything and juggle too many things. So it is kind of letting the air out of some of those juggling balls, you can still juggle them all but just don't feel like you have to do it as you did before. Also forgive your family members when they are getting irritable and frustrated and angry and sick of each other and when you start to notice that it is time to get out of your routine. Throw your shoes on, get outside, just change things up. I told one person the other day, find something that makes you, your day sparkle. Find a way to make today different than yesterday and the next day. Amy has a great way of tracking how, you know, today is not exactly the same as the last few months. Bring some newness, shake it up because motivation is also big word I hear often. Because it is hard to like (sigh) here we go again, another day here stuck at home. What am I going to do today? It is so easy for us to go in those circles but remember we are on a straight line. Well we keep talking about the curve, but let's think of ourselves being in that straight line, we are moving through this. It doesn't mean we're doing it well. Because none of us have done this before. So it's being kind and freak out sometimes on people that you shouldn't have own it, acknowledge, okay having a bit of a bad day, I need to talk to a friend, I need to read a book, need to take time away from a computer. I don't know if that helps to answer your question Carmen.

>> Carmen Sutherland: I think those are some great thoughts. Nadine and Amy, do you have thoughts on this subject at all?

>> Nadine Vertes: Well I would say that Yes, it is new to some people. It is now to most people. But in my experience, my personal experience as someone who dealt with chronic life threat evening illness and disability, I had to learn how to wait. I had to learn that sometimes your life just kind of pauses and you just have to get through that time before you can continue. So that for me would be a hospital stay, three months. Or being in heart failure, that was five years. You know, it's just different and I do, I find it very fascinating watching other people who don't have this kind of life experience and see how they deal with the quarantine and the pandemic, because it is just so outside of what they know someone like me it's a lot of what I know.

>> Carmen Sutherland: That is a really, a really good point. I really thank you for sharing that as well because that is an experience that lots of people, even people with other disabilities and other needs may experience but maybe not to the same degree or maybe not for the same period of time. I think that waiting and just accepting how life is at the current moment is a very good thing for all of us to learn from. Before we get to the questions, is there anything else that any of you would like to share?

>> Amy Mathers: I think Nadine's mic is off.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Nadine, do you have something you want to say? Are you able to unmute yourself?

>> Nadine Vertes: Sorry, I just would like to say that um I would encourage the community to,

persons with disabilities, and I would [audio cut out] persons with disabilities to reach out [audio cut out] --

>> Carmen Sutherland: Maybe if I can repeat that because I don't think maybe everyone heard all of your words. I think perhaps you said would encourage the community to reach out to people with disabilities and you would encourage people with disabilities to reach out to the community. Is that right?

>> Nadine Vertes: That's right.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Wonderful. Marina? Is it all right if we go to some questions now?

>> Marina Dotzert: Can you hear me now?

>> Carmen Sutherland: Yes.

>> Marina Dotzert: Okay, good. I tried using a headset I think my voice was cutting in and out a little earlier, if that happens we do have a backup, Lauren just be ready just in case. So we do have a few questions that have come in. So if you, the attendees that are here today have a few questions, please take the opportunity to type them into the question and, the Q and A as well. So one of the first questions is do you feel, once the economic, or economy comes back to being normal do you believe companies and organizations will still honour the use of Internet access for service?

>> Bonnie Taylor: That's a great question, I've been talking to a lot of individuals getting messages from their companies and surveys and trying to find out who would be a best fit to stay at home in the future and changing their whole workplace practise to create more opportunities to work from home. I think that many individuals that have worked with over the years have had negative experiences in asking employers as well medical, as you were saying Amy too, to reduce the travel, reduce the need to work in an office. Pacing the day a little bit differently. Thinking that and hoping that this has been a real eye opener for employers that they will be more flexible in honouring people's requests to work from home. Even doing job interviews from their home and it, I think it is going to reduce some accessibility barriers in the future as a result of this. So let's, let's hope for those that would benefit from continuing to work from home. Let's hope employers continue to support that.

>> Carmen Sutherland: Any more thoughts on that?

>> So Bonnie leading into that question a little bit, you touched on, what you said right now kind of touches on our next question and do you think that accessibility in our society will improve after COVID-19 now that everyone has experienced some of the barriers, maybe not sort of to the same extent, that people with disabilities face every day. For instance, not having access to many places in our community.

>> I hope so. This is something that individual watershed disabilities have been asking for, for years. And it has been so slow in happening and changing buildings that the message has often been well it was to code when the building was built. Well you know what, that's not good enough. When that building was built there were still individuals with disabilities that not able to go into this building. Not able to get into a restaurant however the restaurant, many of them are, if not all are required to have an accessible washroom. But not an accessible front door. So I spoke to somebody recently whose company is now looking at going into a building and having touch free door open and going into a washroom with the touch free sinks and touch free soap dispensers and would be such a benefit even just those things there to continue on because

now individuals that do not have any physical disabilities, yeah this is something we need. We can't do this and this. But I think with the changes, I'm hoping will open up literally doors, for individuals to be able to get, to get more accessibility and this is created a new awareness. Even as Amy you were saying the social isolation, this isn't new. You've been dealing with this. You've been avoiding going into situations where you could potentially get sick. So now companies are trying to even create more hand wash stations, more sanitation, cleaner environments. I'm hoping that will hopefully help protect individuals that do have underlining and underlining health conditions to continue to stay healthier.

>> The commercial I love that first time I saw it I kind of stared at it and then I was like when the tag line came up and it was Rick Hansen, he was talking about how the whole world should be accessible. The commercial itself was so many different pictures of accessibility we don't enjoy now. Yes I agree with them, I want the world to be like that. But I think it is going to be more complicated than we expect. I don't know if all of the is going to be kept certainly there will be things added that are accessible but are really for not getting COVID so there is that makes, I wonder if it social distancing increases and continues will everyone have access to the same opportunities? Because as a disabled person who is on ODSO I live under the poverty level, I lived in poverty. So if approximate we have less availability for things of the seems to me that people who have more money will have more opportunities because of that. These are the things that I worry about and I think it will be a change forward but I'm not exactly sure that it is going to be all positive accessible strains.

>> Thank you Amy. Any other thoughts on that question? Or shall we go to the next one? (F)

>> Marina Dotzert: Nadine, sorry you are muted again.

>> Nadine Vertes: I just wanted to say that I would encourage businesses um to look at accessibility standards often, you know, people that sort of, they are not sure about accessibility and they ask what if things are made accessible in the first place um it would be a lot things would take place a lot faster.

>> Yesterday, yesterday our Webinar topic was accessible 101 and one of our panelists talked about how accommodation is what is, sorry accommodation happens after the accessible logs. One of the things she really touched on is that all of us have various experiences and what we need, what will benefit us. It can often be hard for businesses and location or businesses and organizations to meet everyone's needs. So they, she really touched on is not being afraid to ask. Ask how it is that I can help you and anyways just wanted to bring that out there. I really liked the quote of accommodation is after the accessibility so yes there is the AODA rules that we all need to follow, but there is, we can always go above and beyond and really just depends on the individual and asking is the first step. We do have one more question and it says, if any of the panelists received PSW support and can you tell, can you tell us a little bit about some of the stresses surrounding both the increase risk of exposure as well as the lack of available PSLE staff?

>> Carmen Sutherland: I could try to speak to that actually because I do have this support but if that applies any of you ladies, please speak first.

>> Amy Mathers: I did have support from ILC but I did put it on hold and obviously a large part of being helped has been covered by my family so I've been very lucky that way.

>> Carmen Sutherland: I can say that I am very fortunate to have an amazing team of woman

who are doing their best to keep me and also keep each other safe. I think for me and again this is where the various reactions towards situations come in um because I am feeling, you know, very physically healthy at the moment my first thought isn't oh my gosh what happens if I get COVID-19 it's oh my gosh what happens if one of the girls gets COVID-19. And especially, I mean I care obviously very much about my girls, just like they care about me. But also I know that for most of them, they are connected to vulnerable people so that is a thing that is constantly going around in my head. What happens if they are vulnerable, people they are connected to, what if they get COVID-19. But I think, for me, I just have to take it day-by-day and I think we are all taking it day-by-day and just doing our very best and taking all the appropriate precautions that we need to be taking and just hoping for the best once we have, once we are making sure that we are engaging in all of the proper safety precautions.

>> I'm working with a few individuals now who have also elected not to have the PS Personal Support Workers or nursing care come into the home because there is, I guess the risk outweighs the need and I'm not saying the need isn't there. But really some family members have stepped in to provide that support. The risk there is also on the care giver, because it can be very draining on family members not that they don't want to be there to care for their loved ones, but that's also not something that they are trained to do that's, you know, it also crosses that barrier of between friend and Personal Support Worker or family member and Personal Support Worker. I have a few people that are caring for loved ones with dementia that I'm aware of. That can also pose own challenges because of the short-term memory being impacted, the constant reminders of don't forget to wash your hands, why do I have to wash my hands. It is just constantly having to be that reminder, can take its toll on the caregiver but also the person that is receiving the care. Because then I heard why are you treating me like a child, why are you telling me to wash my hand, why can't I go out and talk to my neighbors like we always do? So that poses own challenges too for the family members because they are isolated as well because they are trying to keep other family members and friends from coming in and out of the homes and it is hard because they are trying to protect everybody they care about as well as themselves.

>> Bonnie you touched on a little bit of what our conversation will be tomorrow and that's the emotional labour of having a disability and um that's a conversation we are going to have tomorrow just so many extra things people have to think about and receiving personal care is one of those things so that's a shameless plug for tomorrow. [LAUGHTER] Pardon?

>> Nadine Vertes: I is didn't even know I was helping to lead in [LAUGHTER] --

>> Marina Dotzert: It worked out wonderful, thank you. I am cautious of the time, we have three more minutes. I know there was one more person who was trying to ask a question, I hope they can squeeze it in but I will kind of start closing things off a little bit. So now that brings us to the end of our question and answer period I just want to say thank you to Nadine, Amy and Bonnie for taking the time to tell us about your experiences and share your wisdom with us today, thank you. Carmen also thank you for leading our conversation today, finally I want to thank everyone for joining us, we hope you found value in our suggestions, if you wish to learn more about topics today or provide any comments or feedback, please do not hesitate to reach out by e-mailing access@kitchener.ca, there is some really great organizations in our region looking to assist you and we can help you find them. A few of those great organizations have actually

helped organize our Webinar for this week and they are Bridges to Belonging, Waterloo Region. Canadian Hearing Services, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, Community Support Connections, Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region and finally Kitchener Waterloo accessibility and want to mention closed captioning, video relay and captioning, made possible by City of Kitchener and City of Waterloo, thank you to them. Copy of this kitchener.ca/inclusion and finally please, um another famous plug, please be sure to check out any or all of our remaining Webinars for this week running from Wednesday to Friday from 1 until 2:00 for more information or to register go to kitchener.ca/inclusion, thank you to everyone for joining us today. If you do have any questions e-mail access@kitchener.ca. I do see, we have one minute and I'm going to see if I can get the one question that is coming in to maybe use their mic so just bear with me here for a second. Allow to talk. Can you, can you speak Melissa?

>> Yeah. Can you hear me?

>> Marina Dotzert: I can, what is your question?

>> Okay so it's not really a question, I just wanted to say you guys did a great job and I also wanted to say that um I think on job applications it should have um like I don't know what the word is, should have the option to work from home because that's the only thing really stopping people with disabilities from being employed especially when they have medical issues like myself.

>> Marina Dotzert: You are right Melissa, where we think we are hoping, through I know this very unfortunate COVID-19 stuff that's happening, I hope that it has opened up minds to a lot of businesses and organizations that maybe it is not as hard to accommodate people as they might of perceived it in the past. In fact the average accommodation fee for a workplace accommodation fee is 500 and it is usually a one time fee. So depending it can go up or down depending on the individual. But a lot of them are free, there is lots of government options available out there. But I am mindful of the time that it is 2:01 and I just want to say thank you to everyone for participating, you have been wonderful and we hope to see you tomorrow. Bye now.

>> See you tomorrow.

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