Successfully Engaging Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities via Technology: Strategies and Best Practices

Kristie Kulinski: Hello, on behalf of the Administration for Community Living (ACL), welcome to today's webinar, Successfully Engaging Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities via Technology: Strategies and Best Practices. I am Kristie Kulinski. We are excited for this webinar as we had more than 2,000 participants. This webinar will highlight programs, best practices, and tips for creating communities of learning and engagement technology. Presenters will address marketing and outreach, barriers to virtual participation, strategies for holding attractive and inclusive conversations, and more.

Now, a few housekeeping reminders. The link for closed captioning will be shared via the chat feature. All audio will remain muted throughout the webinar. However, we encourage you to use the chat feature for questions. Please, feel free to chat your questions throughout the session. You do not have to wait until the end. When doing so, please select to send your message to "all panelists". Lastly, a recording of this session will be made available following the session on the ACL COVID-19 webpage. Next slide, please.

Now, I would like to introduce our esteemed presenters. I am only sharing very brief information, but there is certainly more I could share about each of them. They are truly experts in this area and we are delighted to have their expertise on today's webinar. We have Ryan Elza, the Social Entrepreneur for Social Connectedness at AARP, and he leads the digital inclusion work. He has an extensive background in social determinants of health, design, thinking, and civic engagement. He has an entrepreneurship Master's degree and mentors students, and startups with various development.

Steve Ewell is the Executive Director of the Consumer Technology Association Foundation, a charitable foundation with the mission of linking seniors and people with disabilities to technology to enhance their lives. They support programs to create technology for independence, purpose, and vital connections for people across the country. He serves on the Advisory Council for Inclusive Design and Engineering at the University of Colorado, and Enhancing Neurocognitive Health Abilities Networks, and Community Engagement at Cornell.

Tom Kamber, PhD, is an award-winning entrepreneur and activist who has created new initiatives in aging, technology, affordable housing, and the arts. He is the founding Executive Director of Older Adults Technology Services or OATS, committed to harnessing the power of technology as we age. He has helped 30,000 seniors get online and create the first technology themed community center for adults.

And we have Susan Stiles, the National Council on Aging, Senior Director of Product Development and Strategy. She has a background in media, design, content creation, and information technology. She currently provides leadership in the design and development of consumer products that inspire, educate, and activate older adults. Next slide, please.

Before I turn it over to Steve Ewell to get us started, a quick but exciting announcement from ACL. We announced the Mobilizing and Empowering the Nation to Address Isolation or

MENTAL Health innovation challenges. The challenge is picking solutions for socially isolated individuals and match them with appropriate technology tools, and social engagement programming that best meets their needs. Critical partners for designing solutions to this challenge should include a team of key stakeholders with relevant expertise, as well as knowledge of technologies and programs to address isolation. Teams will coordinate with or be informed by a No Wrong Door (NWD) System. I know we have a number of our No Wrong Door states and grantees on this call today. The challenge will competed in three phases with cash prizes in each phase. The total prize award available is $750,000 and the top two contenders will present at the CES 2021 conference in Las Vegas, where the winner will be announced. Submissions for phase one are due on September 8th. For more specific info, visit www.challenge.gov. I will turn it over to Steve to get us started.

Steve Ewell: Thank you so much, Kristie. Thank you all for having me here today. I am really thrilled to be part of this conversation. It is such an important topic to cover today. Next slide.

So, for any of you that don't know, the Consumer Technology Association (CTA) Foundation is the charitable foundation associated with Consumer Technology Association. They represent about 2,000 technology companies, everything from large, global brands and 80% of the members are small businesses, startups, and are best known for running CES, the global stage for innovation. It's a large tech show every January in Las Vegas. We are always excited to see all of the innovations that occur out there each year. Next slide.

The CTA Foundation, as Kristie Kulinski mentioned, our goal is to connect older people with technology to assist their lives. We are working with nonprofits across the country, who are doing a ton of interesting work to help these populations, using different types of technologies. So, we see a lot of great examples of ways to address social isolation. Social isolation has really been at the heart of our work since we launched the Foundation just about eight years ago. I will highlight a few examples that we have seen, but I know we are going to hear from great examples from the AARP Foundation. Next slide.

As many of you are experiencing, things are changing in the time of COVID-19. We are going from opportunities to get people together in large rooms, where we have great discussions - opportunities to take classes, learn about different types of activities - and moving that into a virtual environment, whether it's a WebEx, like today, Zoom, other types of solutions, along those lines or whether it's one-on-one education, bringing large groups of people. This has been a major challenge for many organizations, but we are seeing some great examples of ways people are taking this head on, and really finding ways to not only continue to meet the needs of their populations, but also ways to expand for their reach. We certainly need to be aware of challenges as we address this. Whether it's accessibility features like having captions, so people who are deaf or hard of hearing can follow along with the presentation, things like being able to bring the presentation to braille readers, for deaf and blind participants, making sure the presenters, if they are talking about a chart or other piece of information, that they are describing the chart, not just throwing it up on the screen where our attendees who are blind or low vision might not be able to follow along. These are definitely challenges that need to be addressed. We also have to look at the environment we are in, whether it is communities where many people are living on site, community centers where people have traditionally been going to those locations, and how we are engaging for peer engagement, as well as opportunities to engage in the home. Next slide, please.

So, now going into a couple of examples of what we are seeing from grantees. One I really wanted to highlight is the Jewish Healthcare Foundation out of Pittsburgh. They have the Virtual Senior Academy. They have managed to build up this Academy, which was started prior to COVID-19. It was an opportunity to bring people from around Western Pennsylvania together, create opportunities to take classes, and get engaged. But they have seen a massive increase in interest, and they have also expanded the geographic scope. They now have over 1,300 users that are engaged in the program on a regular basis, and it doesn't require high technology on behalf of the users. They are able to operate and participate from desktop, laptop computers, tablets, phones, other solutions along those lines. It's really an amazing way to pull people together. We have also worked with other resolutions, such as self-help senior centers, and others, but this is really a great example to bring people together around a region or around a country without having to have, you know, the most advanced technology engaged. Next slide, please.

Another option is CareWheels. This is a program out of Oregon and they have created a CareBank system. Essentially, what they are doing is, it's very similar to and works really well with the village model, where you are able to bring together a collection of participants, and they are able to use different sensors. They are using Samsung wearables and other sensors. INTEL has been very involved in that work. This can help when someone needs additional assistance. It essentially alerts people within the ring and they can provide the assistance or provide connection. They essentially bank hours for that. When they need support and solutions, they have opportunities to draw upon that, as well, so we find that to be an interesting opportunity and it's a way to not just provide services but provide connections. We have a strong network of people who you are working with, serving, and keeping an eye on it. Next slide, please.

Another group that we have been doing a lot of work with his Front Porch. In particular, the Front Porch Center for well-being. I know Ryan will have an opportunity to share a lot about AARP and what they are doing with voice technology, but we've seen them use great solutions for voice technology to tie people together, make them easy to have telephone services. That can be helpful for caregivers, as well, just to provide the extra peace of mind if you know something seems off. If a thermostat is set to a very off temperature, you know to check in and it's just that little extra peace of mind, without invading someone's privacy and too extreme of a degree. Next slide, please.

This one is a little bit different, but as I've been talking about different solutions to address social isolation, we are also seeing quite a bit of questions about how do people learn about the technologies out there? How do they get hands on with the technology and know if it's going to work with them? We've been working with Oak Hill in Hartford, Connecticut, to develop the Smart Home on Wheels. It's essentially a tiny home that has been built fully accessible, and is loaded with different types of technology products that people can try out, get hands on experience. The real advantage we are seeing with what they can actually bring this home to a VA, a senior center, another community. So, if you can't come to them, it's an opportunity to bring these types of technologies to other people. We certainly recommend options like Bridging Applications, Senior Navigator, lighthouse organizations, other disability advocacy organizations. There are different ways to learn about the technologies out there. Next slide, please.

That's a really, really quick, high-level overview, but I want to make sure we have plenty of time to turn it over to the other speakers, as well. I am excited to see what types of

technologies are out there, what types of innovative, new solutions are being developed, as well. I really believe that challenges lead to greater innovation, and 2020 has certainly thrown its share of challenges our way. I am excited to see what innovations everyone here is going to come up with, and how that's really going to help all of us living independently, moving forward. I am happy to answer questions at the end. I will turn it back over to Kristie.

Kristie Kulinski: Thank you for kicking us off. Now, I would like to turn it over to Ryan Elza with AARP foundation.

Ryan Elza: Thank you so much, Kristie. Steve provided examples of addressing isolation through social technology, and how many are adapting for the current need. I am going to walk through considerations on assessing your audience, and identifying different technologies that are feasible and approachable. As noted, I am Ryan Elza from AARP Foundation. For those of you who may not be familiar, AARP Foundation works to end senior poverty by helping older adults build opportunities. If we're to address personal isolation, it's important to identify risk factors. Social isolation is often caused by a combination of risk factors that occur at the societal, community, and individual levels. It's important to think about how these may influence what programs and technology solutions may be most helpful to the people you serve and are working with, or are feasible. Next slide.

There are different approaches you can take to create environments of learning and engagement. These approaches may build off of one another. The first starts with assessment and education. It is important to take a person centered approach to understanding isolation and technology needs of a person. You will want to identify barriers to technology access, Internet access, affordability of devices and software, and other considerations to an individual's well-being. It's also important to think about how, as part of your education and outreach, are you raising awareness about the importance of social connection as part of your efforts? At the next level, there are several ways you can connect individuals to technology and training. Many programs offer synchronous and asynchronous online classes on technology education, such as AARP and OATS, who you will hear from next. There are also training applications online that individuals can download to their devices and walk-through at their own pace. You can find additional resources and connect to a robust playbook on the option from www.connecthomeUSA.org. There are strategies in that playbook that can be adapted to other organizations as you think about the most effective strategies to implementing technology. Also, everyone on that board who manages a search portal on access programs, you can search by Z.I.P. code and different qualifications for programs and solutions that may work for the people you are working with. Finally, there are many ways you can engage people through virtual programming. Many organizations, such as libraries, and museums, have transitioned their programming to be free and accessible online. Others have changed to virtual engagements, such as PEARLS, which is the Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives. It's an intervention for older adults with depression that uses behavioral activation strategies at home or other accessible community settings. They have recently transitioned their model to virtual engagements through phone interactions and video chat. Next slide, please.

Here, you can find many additional resources related to the topics of social isolation and depression. You will find tools and resources for individuals, practitioners, and researchers. Specifically, we have a lot of curated content around how you can remain connected using technology during these times. Next slide.

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Also on Connect2Affect, we have resources so everyone can understand their own risk factors for isolation. It's a simple, engaging tool to understand what risk factors may be and how you can practically take steps to mitigate your risk for isolation or address the issues moving forward to live a more connected life. AARP Foundation has been working to bridge the technology divide through voice-activated technology like Amazon Alexa and Google assistant. We have created our own voice applications to connect older adults, specifically to organizations and allow them to interact, and access information through smart speakers. Next slide.

Our program model is based on a train the trainer model, where we work with providers of affordable housing to empower their staff to be able to install devices for residents. We have developed a full training curriculum that can be used with residents, including handouts and explainer videos that can be taken home to make sure residents are able to use the smart speakers the way they want to. Next slide.

You will see here, Miss Shirley, who is one of our most active participants at Weinberg Place, who is actually a trainer with in her community, and has taught over a dozen cohorts of her neighbors on how to use speakers in their community. We have adapted our model based off of COVID technology and we have transitioned to creating remote training for staff and volunteers, transitioning all of our remote content into remote workshops and presentations, and guided trainings. We have also now included, as part of our education, important information related to telehealth now that older adults are less likely to leave their home, being fearful of the impact of the current pandemic situation. We have also created our own AARP Foundation voice application that is a voice-enabled version of our assessment that lives off of Connect2Affect. You can say, "hey, Alexa" or "hey, Google" and it will walk you through the exercise of understanding your own risk of social isolation. That can be a great first step for individuals to engage with technology. Next slide.

That's it for me. I am going to turn it back to Kristie and onto OATS. Thank you so much.

Kristie Kulinski: Terrific. I know Ryan and Steve, in our presentation, have shared a number of terrific resources, and hyperlinks. I do want to remind you that the webinar slides will be available on the ACL COVID-19 website. The website link has been put into the chat feature. The slides should be available by Wednesday next week. If you all are furiously jotting down hyperlinks, and our presenters are speaking, you don't need to do that. We will make sure the slides are available on our website. I would like to turn it over to Tom Kamber with OATS.

Tom Kamber: Thank you. I am excited to be part of this webinar. We have partnered a lot with Steve and AARP. It's nice to share the virtual stage with people. Next slide, please.

I was asked to speak about two things. First, the outreach to audiences and secondly, the barriers people face in terms of creating online programming for people with potential isolation. One quick minute of background information on OATS. We are a national nonprofit based in New York City. We have been around since 2004, teaching free technology programs to people over the age of 60 since that time. We run programs that are partnerships under the rubric of a nonprofit itself, but programs designed for seniors themselves are packaged under Senior Planet. Our website is www.seniorplanet.org. Those are all OATS supported senior programs. We have operations in six states with Senior Planet locations across the country, and have partnered with groups on a wide variety of different things. It may be on the housing side, the service side, or the aging sector. We will send out

all of our links afterward. I will pile on these questions around how to make sure you reach audiences when you do this work.

When COVID first began, OATS had already been doing trainings under a model of what we call blended learning. Most of the programs we provide had a classroom basis, but the classroom experience was supplemented by online learning materials, and we had built up about 200 modules that were linked together in a system called Senior Planet U. People would get signed up, and they could watch videos or share information online, do practice sessions for online banking, communicating via Twitter, or different tools we are building for them. When COVID happened, we had to pivot to the online space. We simply adapted the face-to-face classroom parts into virtual, and simplified them, so they could be run as a series, but you wouldn't have to participate in every class to get a positive experience. We started running the classes early on. Like many organizations that serve clients directly, we weren't quite sure what to expect and early on, our classes had very few participants. We would have three people in a session, six people. But we also found about half of the people who came had already taken courses or programs with us, word-of-mouth spread, and this accelerated. So, what we found was, building our established brand identity was a really strong element in our ability to grow this to a lot of people and we had an approach to our programming.

As we were building the user population, we found people needed a mixture of two different kinds of content. We surveyed 3,800 people in the first couple weeks of the COVID crisis and asked them whether they were online, how they were online, what kind of content they wanted. We found two categories of information requested. First, a lot of practical information - applications, the needs people have. People needed courses on how to use Zoom or what are some different options for technology devices. Very simple, straightforward questions. They still wanted the same high quality content and experiences that they had been experiencing through the Senior Planet Centers.

There was a mixture of the practical and social content. This gives you an example. We've had super popular classes on stretching and fitness online. They've had hundreds of people on them. We have a really great program on spotting fake news and scams. If you don't have the practical, people get very frustrated with not knowing the skills, and if you don't have the social, it's too limiting. The mixture was a benefit for us. Next slide, please.

A really critical element in our growth rate has been this notion of leveraging larger partners for reach. OATS is a relatively smaller organization. It's a medium sized. 80 staff in six states. A typical class today is about 200 to 500 people. Usually, around 200. What we found was, our relationships with some of the larger partners like AARP or the city of New York, as an example, allowed us to leverage distribution networks for much larger networks of people. The first stage of this was, in the beginning of the crisis, the city of New York announced, partly in our instigation, that they were going to provide 10,000 free tablet computers that are T-Mobile machines with free T-Mobile Internet access to seniors in public housing developments, in New York City. We were excited because it extends the technology to a group of people who need to be online. The city asked us to be their partner doing the training and support for people. So, we did. We created a call center overnight almost. Within two weeks, we created this call-center to support fulfillment as the tablets were being delivered. We did 9,700 phone calls in a 10-day period, and we got 10,000 phone calls back. What we were able to do was build up this large population of users, using our programs and partnership with the city of New York, so this larger partner connection made a difference. We have been working with AARP on online programming, again, on the practical side.

Things like, how to get the best out of Zoom and how to optimize Social Security benefits online, and use the tools out there to get better management of your Social Security administration data, and information. Those programs are running 10,000 people roughly per session. Those are really outstanding numbers. Next slide.

You can see the results of our relationship with partners during the time of COVID has been spiking pretty dramatically, so I can answer questions, but I don't want to go on that for too long. Then people have asked about addressing barriers. I know Steve and others on this call have a lot of expertise working with people with disabilities. I am going to defer to their expertise, but most OATS programming is targeted for people over 60 as a group. We get people with impairments, and people who are comparatively healthy at times. It's a real mixture of people coming into our seminars and programs. We are careful to make sure all of our programming is designed for people on the basis of capabilities, access, and experience. But the barriers issue comes up in a few different ways. I will address them really quickly.

First of all, a lot of people don't think of it this way, but a lot of older adults are trying to get into mainstream platforms so they can participate with what their family, neighbors, or peers are using. In our experience, if you can get people to main stream technologies, it reduces the overall barriers to participation in the digital space for new participants. So, if they are coming on, try to figure out whether they can use email or an iPad, Internet browser. We recommend getting people onto things like the chrome browser, or a basic iPad, or Gmail. A lot of these mainstream technologies may have a learning curve in the beginning. Once a person is up to speed, it reduces barriers and creates a lot more opportunity for them to get support in those physical environments.

A lot of them need skills training. We separated out the skills training from the content training. I think that's pretty important. That has seemed to really work well. A lot of people go into a Zoom session to learn how to use Zoom and then they will go to a fitness class, and they will feel more comfortable participating in the fitness program. To overcome barriers, I think it's important to address the fact that people are coming from an area where they need direct training on the skills that are needed in order to access your other content programs that are going on. It's very difficult to teach the same content and skills when you are flying an airplane while building it. It's important to build those skills for people in parallel with other programming. Next slide, please.

A big barrier for people is, what I would call, sloppy content delivery that everyone experienced at the beginning of the crisis. Online programming is difficult to do well. It's hard to develop the skills to prevent when you can't see your audience. You get things to be more emotionally upbeat for people to engage in and find ways to package things in the flow of the digital experience. A very different set of skills. One of the barriers we found was our inadequacy in terms of capacity, so we spent a lot of time observing staff, training staff, setting up protocols, and setting up tools to make sure programming is effective. It really made a difference. I think there was correspondence between what I would describe as a certain quality of what we were doing and level of participation, and return participation in the session. Next slide.

Very quickly, we asked almost 1,000 people about wanting to learn online and technology skills were number one if you see the yellow stripe there at 20%. That is the technology area. The other big topics were education and travel, which were roughly 13% of the population.

We also, if you look at the slide deck, saw that people wanted music. They want today wide range of different kinds of experiences. It was interesting how broad that was. Next slide.

Last point here is, before COVID, we asked people whether or not they would recommend our programs to a friend or relative. It's called the net provider score. It's a way of measuring if people are satisfied with your programming. We had that across all of our programming. I was very worried that when we started doing the program virtually, the quality of experience would go down and our net promoter score would go down and satisfaction ratings would be reduced. For whatever reason, probably a bunch of variables, the net score is higher than before COVID. So, the value of the programs, because of people that experienced them, whether they recommend them to others, is extraordinarily high, even using a digital channel. I think that's my last slide. That's it. That's all of our content on it. Feel free to reach out, if we can be helpful. I appreciate being part of the seminar today.

Kristie Kulinski: Thank you so much, Tom. There was some tangible, concrete information contained within your presentation that I think the participants really benefited from. Thank you so much. Finally, to wrap us up before we move on to Q&A, I am turning it over to Susan Stiles from the National Council on Aging.

Susan Stiles: Thank you so much. I'm very happy to be here. I am very excited to build on what we've talked about thus far in the webinar. Next slide, please.

I am going to talk a little bit about interactive and inclusive conversations, and examples of addressing social isolation via technology. Then, I'll outline a few additional resources other than the ones we have seen already that you can refer to. Starting up, ensuring that conversations online are interactive, and inclusive, really means taking from best practices for in-person experience and in-person interactive, and inclusive conversation. Here, the big difference is the delivery method, and being or paying close attention to how the technology can really benefit and can really, you know, enhance that online interaction. I would like to go through here, starting with planning ahead. Thinking closely about the purpose of the class, the workshop, the webinar, whatever it might be that you are designing, and thinking about it through the lens of one question. What should participants do as the result of attending? Thinking about purpose through the lens of an action step can really help you laser focus the content of the overall experience. You will very likely want attendees to do something and not just be passive listeners.

Technology choice, of course, is really important. Surveying the audience and understanding their needs, and also what they have access to will help you in the design of the experience. I do encourage you to think creatively about how you can deliver your content to the most people. It doesn't always need to be one-size-fits-all. We are seeing a lot of examples of classes delivered in a hybrid format, where some participants are online, and some participants are just using their telephone. The links are also going to be important options to consider, for sending any read, watch, or listen ahead materials. This is important if you want to get people in the mindset of the topic that you are going to cover, and it also lends really well to point 2, which is favoring experiential learning. So, if people kind of have an idea of what they are learning about in your workshop or your webinar, they will be kind of prepped when they come to it. We know that adults learn and interact best when they can bring their own experiences to bear on a particular topic, and have even the opportunity for a little hands-on resolution in the experience. Experiential learning will really help participants bring their own lives into the conversation. So, it becomes their conversation. If possible, I would

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encourage you to have participants lead parts of the class discussion, particularly if you are running a multipart workshop or class, this can work really well. You can assign homework and review the homework the following week as a good conversation starter, and also, as a really powerful way for peer knowledge sharing. When people can see how others are putting learning into action, that can be very inspirational. Ask more questions than you normally would do in an in-person environment. And because of the features in an online environment, the chat question features, there are more options for interactivity and multiple conversations to have at once. While you're asking more questions, also encourage your participants to be answering one another's questions. That gets them involved and help them showcase their knowledge. Next slide.

Step three is a little bit more to do with how you set up the content and design experience, and how you manage the class. Presenting the content in different formats is going to keep your audience engaged. It's as simple as that. Mix discussion with collaboration, with video, and audio clips. Polls, quizzes, hands-on exercises, including, you know, bite-size chunks of information, are generally preferred over a long lecture. I think we all know that, but it's particularly true in a virtual environment where minds can wander. You should be prepared to have two people manage a session, so you can ensure all voices are heard. The last point here is, find ways to continue the conversation. It might be via newsletter, email group, social media. If possible, again, I would like to stress, recruit participants to leave these conversations as champions. Help them to kind of carry on that conversation. Next slide, please.

I would like to show a few examples of programs that really enhance social connectedness via technology. Using both high-tech and low-tech, some of these programs have virtual components. Others shifted to virtual when the COVID crisis hit. The aging mastery program is an example of a program at shifted when COVID hit. This was traditionally a 10-part series of in-person classes when COVID became a reality. Many of our senior centers and other partners that run these classes are offering them online now. What we are seeing is that the engagement and behavioral change has always really been part of the program and has continued in the new environment.

To what Tom said, it has been a bit of a learning curve. We are continually in contact with our partners to get feedback from them, see what works, what isn't working, what other tools and resources they might need, to run more interactive classes. Because the participants stay together for several weeks, they do form strong bonds, and they do kind of take it on themselves to really be part of the discussion. By week three or four, the discussion is quite vibrant. Next slide, please.

I think that's expressed really well in this testimonial from a recent virtual class. I like this quote a lot because it speaks to the reluctance that people might have to join an online class. It's a commitment of 10 weeks, so they are committing to something upfront, and sticking with it for a bit of time. For this person, that reluctance changed to a happy realization that the class online could be worthwhile, and also impactful. Next slide, please.

I just wanted to point out that some of our sites and organizations are also running the 10-week program via phone with absolutely no other technology. We are getting many of the same results. At least a few organizations are doing what I referred to earlier, kind of a hybrid program where some participants are coming online, and others are joining the class via phone. Next slide, please.

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Ryan talked about earlier, the connect2affect program, and project. A product and experience here that really brings residents, housing staff, and social support services together using smart speakers. When they did a study of this a couple years ago, it did show that residents increased their social engagement. They felt more supported socially, and decreased their feelings of loneliness. Having that small technology tool at the ready, and their apartment really was a great connection point to the world and to one another. Next slide, please.

Then I have a couple of examples here from Senior Planet. As Tom mentioned, Senior Planet has really been at the forefront for years of helping older adults feel comfortable and confident online, and when COVID came about, they definitely switched into high gear, to offer a broad array of classes. I think most of them were free, to introduce people to new technologies. These classes are still running, so people can access them now. What I love about this testimonial is, you can see this class, this attendee realized the class was a lot more than just about learning how to use Zoom. The class really opened up part of the world to this person. It's helping this person navigate the world, participate in the world. And so, giving them, giving individuals that access, and that level of comfort to use technology is really critical right now when that might be their only inroad into the world, if they can't go outside. Next slide, please.

One more example from Senior Planet. Again, this is a testimonial from the stretching and meditation class that they run, but it's clear from the testimonial that the class is about much more than simply stretching. This class is really a vital connection point for this individual. They call it a lifesaver. I think this is really important to call out. Even if the topic might be one thing - it might be an exercise, it might be a cooking class, technology class. The topic itself is important, but the connecting people together, and feeling that sense of community is a huge, happy outcome, also of these classes.

And then, one final example from the next slide, from the Motion Picture Television Fund, they have expanded their own social call program into an online hub for organizations to promote their programs, and you can get in touch with them to learn more about it. Basically, this is kind of a modern-day version of an old-fashioned phone tree that links volunteers with older adults, and then the Call Hub is neat because it's a way for your organization to then keep track of volunteers, keep track of the phone calls that are being made, and see how effective your social call program is.

Finally, I wanted to call out a few resources. It's certainly not all resources and Ryan has mentioned a few that are important, but these are some that can kind of help you get started thinking about ways to reach your remote audience. Choosing technologies - just speaking in general about social isolation and what the needs might be for your audience - AARP, which Ryan mentioned already, is an incredible resource. Georgia Tools for Life is a one-stop shop guide to assistive technologies, and LeadingAge has put out a social connectedness, and engagement technology tool. Here, you can, you know, it's a nice matrix that can help you choose the technology or look at different technologies, and see what kind of features they have, and then if you are thinking about your audience, see if those features meet the needs of the type of engagement you want to have with your audience. There is a socialization modality built into the matrix which is really neat. You can see what types of engagement and socialization features are available, in particular, with the technology. And for an engaging website, it has many tips and guides, and a lot of webinars, and they are still running the webinars on social isolation. The Council on Aging, we have been putting together webinars and case studies that give examples of how community partners are

shifting to different programs during the COVID crisis. This link just goes to one of those pages. There are others on our site. I wanted to highlights the next slide, please.

Senior Planet. They really have an array of resources, online classes, video tutorials, engagement guides, and then, really importantly, a national tech help hotline. With that, I will turn it back over to you, Kristie, to address questions.

Kristie Kulinski: Thank you so much. Those are practical resources and that's great information on engagement strategies, and inclusive conversations. We have received a number of questions through our chat feature. We will try to get to as many as we can. I think our first question I am going to post to you, Steve, and if others have input, as well. Are there any grants available to access technology devices, like tablets, Google home, Alexa, etc., specifically for older adults and individuals with disabilities?

Steve Ewell: That's a great question, and certainly, one that we get quite a bit. We will open up the next call for proposals for the CTA foundation towards the end of September. So, I will provide my contact information to you, Kristie, if you can get that out to anyone who is interested. You can email me. I am happy to share it. There are also more foundations getting engaged in funding technology as part of aging or disability. I know Grantmakers has a number of foundations looking more into this space. AARP Foundation is doing a lot of work in this space, too.

Kristie Kulinski: Terrific. Thank you, Steve. Another question for Ryan. For participants working with populations that lack digital literacy, or have a lack of access to digital tech, are there suggestions on more low-tech ideas? Susan mentioned the mastery programs delivered over the phone. We are familiar with some friendly check ins. But any other models that are more low-tech with respect to social engagement?

Ryan Elza: Thank you. There are a lot of great organizations out there. Another one in the space of connecting over the phone is COVIA. They have remote classes for people to dial in and they will send materials printed in advance of those sessions, so they are able to have the same level of experience as folks who are participating through online video conferencing series, and there are also other opportunities through different community-based organizations for engagement at the hyper local level, so I would reach out to your local senior center, and see what type of engagement they might be offering that are low-tech because, typically, there will be a number of them. And also, think about your local office on assisted technology that may help bridge the divide and cost factors.

Kristie Kulinski: Terrific. Thank you. Tom, you mentioned the sequencing of training. First, training individuals on how to use the technology, and then offering some sort of class through the technology. Have you experienced any changes or have any suggestions for how to make that transition into this particular participant? Say they've done the in-person trainings in the past and they've had a tough time transitioning to using technology as a medium for delivering content.

Tom Kamber: Sure. I think there are two things that are really important. One is making sure that you are linking those two modalities. We try to pair up the methodological training with content training and make sure the content is almost embedded in or referenced by the other training. Sometimes, if you are teaching a generic class on Zoom, but you haven't thought about how that's going to fit into the stretching process, it make it difficult to

visualize the handoff. And for the methodology class, if there's a reference to what you might expect in the class next week, or how to use it in the content, that helps. The other part is, for many people, learning technology is like learning a language. So much of it is getting over that threshold into applying the skills immediately. It's important for us to make sure the timing between the sessions is minimal. Hopefully, the next day or very soon, so people don't lose the skills they've used. Sometimes, people really need a coach to help them face this one on one, which we do for our call centers. That individual coaching can get someone over the threshold, as well.

Kristie Kulinski: A quick follow up. There's a lot of interest in the Senior Planet classes. A number of your colleagues put in a plug for Senior Planet. Are there any costs or fees associated for either older adults who want to access these classes or Area Agencies on Aging in Oregon who want to promote the stretching class? Are there any fees associated at the organizational level?

Tom Kamber: For the general classes that are available online right now, all of those classes are free to end users and we would be perfectly happy with colleagues, and friends in Oregon, or anywhere around the country, the world, to encourage people to sign on to those classes as they are available. We do charge, when we do partnerships with specific providers - like a white label scores, customized programming, or a more limited application for a nonprofit or government partner - we would charge the partner themselves. We also asked for a donation because we are a nonprofit, but we do not charge for our service to seniors.

Kristie Kulinski: That's helpful information. Thank you. We had a question about icebreakers in an online class. Susan, do you have any experience through the aging mastery program or any of the programs delivered on how icebreakers were via chat feature? Or is it better to have people use their voices and engage that way?

Susan Stiles: I really think you can experiment with both. The advantage of the chat feature is, you can kind of keep the class moving, and have people engage with one another while that's happening. Depending on the size of the class, you don't want to take up the time at the beginning with too much discussion. The other technique I've used as an icebreaker is, instead of having people talk about themselves or something, have them just say, maybe one word that describes themselves. This limits the information they are going to give, so you can get input from everybody very quickly. I think it can work either way, but I think probably, using the chat feature would be the best.

Kristie Kulinski: Thank you, Susan. We are just about at the top of the hour. I want to be respectful of our panelists and our participants' time. Thank you to all of our presenters who joined us today. Thank you for taking the time out of your schedules to share your expertise with the group. This was a really informative and useful presentation. And to all of the participants who joined us, thank you. We will make sure the webinar slides, the recording, and the transcript are up on the COVID-19 ACL website next week. I want to wish everyone a great remainder of their day, and their week. We will wrap up the webinar for today. You may now disconnect. Thank you so much.