

# LGBTQ+ Covid 19 Listening Session

CHARITY HOPE: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining our listening session on sustaining services for LGBTQ survivors during COVID-19. I'm Miss Charity Hope. I'm with the Center on Victimization and Safety at the Vera Institute of Justice and the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims.

We're going to go over just a few quick logistical items while we still have some of our colleagues continue to join us in our Zoom room. I'm watching those attendee numbers go up as we speak. So as we are allowing everyone to continue to come into the room, I want to remind everyone that participants are in listen and view only mode, which means we should not be able to hear you, but you should be able to hear us, or you should be able to see the American Sign Language interpreter.

If you'd like to turn on your captioning, please go to the bottom of your Zoom screen. There's a little caption box down there. It has CC on it. To the right of that box is an arrow. If you select that arrow, a couple of options should appear. And you can either select show subtitle or view full transcript.

Once you do, you'll be able to see the words I'm speaking below our video. I think from view, I can actually see it below Michael, but it might be below me. Or you'll be able to see the transcript to the right of your screen.

If you can not hear the presenter speaking, if you're having any difficulties with the captioning, or you can't see the American Sign Language interpreter, or any other technical difficulties, please enter a message in the chat box at the bottom of your screen. Again, right next to that little captioning box, there should be a chat box. And you'll be able to communicate with us here. That is the best way to communicate with me or the National Resource Center or FORGE staff who are standing by to assist you today.

A few other quick notes, if you join the session via a web browser, you'll only be able to view the American Sign Language interpreter, and you will have fewer captioning options. If you have joined via the Zoom app, you should be able view facilitator as well as the ASL interpreter and have a couple more caption choices to choose from. In addition to our American Sign Language interpreting and captioning happening today, we also have spoken language interpretation taking place.

For all these reasons, we ask that you please be able to, or please be sure to pace your speaking to allow for the interpretation and captioning processes that are happening, some on the screen right now and some also behind the screen. We will interject for interpreters, which is as needed and/or to adjust the pace. We'll also be using a few polls today. Once these polls

launch, if they happen to be blocking your view of any one, you can take your cursor and drag them off out of your view.

We will be recording today's session. A link to recording will be made available on our National Resource Center website at [reachingvictims.org](http://reachingvictims.org). You'll be able to find the link to this recording as well as links to our other sessions.

With that, I'm happy to turn this over to Michael Munson, Executive Director of FORGE, who is the project lead for the National Resource Center's efforts on LGBTQ victims and survivors of crime. Michael?

MICHAEL MUNSON: Thanks, Charity. I'm really glad to be here today with all of you. Good morning, good afternoon, whatever time zone you're in. Thanks for joining us today for this listening session on LGBTQ issues. Like Charity said, I'm Michael Munson, FORGE's Executive Director. FORGE is a transgender anti-violence organization that provides training and technical assistance to victim service providers. And as Charity mentioned, we are a partner in the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims.

As we gather here today, we recognize that the toll of COVID-19 has had not only an effect on our clients but also on each of us. Our lives are changed, both in terms of how we do work but also on the personal aspects of how we're living our lives individually. We recognize, too, that many of us doing this work as providers

are also survivors. And that may bring up some intensified emotions as we deal with this pandemic.

We know, too, that many of us are also LGBTQ in addition to being survivors and providers. And that, too, can bring up additional emotions and complicated feelings. We recognize, too, that many of us and many of our clients live at the intersections of multiple identities and multiple experiences which may increase or enhance the challenges being posed to all of us right now. I also wanted to point out, though, that some of those intersections, those multiple intersections that we live at, may also be the source of our greatest resilience and strength. So hopefully we can bring that resilience through as well as looking at the challenges that we face.

We at the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims and those of us at FORGE want to be careful and attentive listeners today. Our job is to be listeners to you all. So this is not a typical webinar format. We're here to listen. We will find many ways to do that today, and today is just the beginning of some of those conversations around LGBTQ folks and serving that population well.

We want to hear from you today, your experiences, your strengths, your challenges, your new and emerging best practices, whatever it is that you would like to share today that will contribute to our overall conversation and well-being. We

know that today will likely bring about more questions than we have answers for. Today is not really about answers as much of it as it is about asking questions and posing things that have worked for us or things that we're concerned about.

And that's all OK. Wherever we end up today is A-OK. So we welcome your questions. We welcome your comments.

So our agenda for today is really simple. Again, I'm here to facilitate this conversation, to listen, to help raise up your voices and capture the things that you bring forward. I'll start us out with some starter questions just to point us in some directions. Charity mentioned we'll have some polls, one poll at least, maybe two.

We'll engage through the chat feature. So hopefully all of you have found the chat feature. And why don't we just practice that right now? So if you can find the chat feature, why don't you type in the state that you're from and the pronoun you use? Let's just take a second to allow people to find that check box. Excellent. Some of you are finding it.

And so as people are typing in their state and their pronouns, you'll definitely be able to see those coming in. Perfect. And y'all can keep on typing your state and pronoun as we move forward. But that's where you'll be able to see other people's typing and

where you'll be able to type some questions and comments as we move forward.

You'll also be able to share by raising your virtual hand. So it should be along the bottom of your screen if you're in the Zoom map. And I believe it's at the bottom of the screen if you're in a web browser.

So you'll be able to raise your hand virtually. And one of our great Vera staff people will unmute you somehow, because they know how to do that with their magic. And then you'll be allowed to speak. And if you're using ASL, we'll be able to allow you to come in your video and be able to share your comments that way.

At the end of our session today, we'll end with, once the session closes, a survey. And that's a place where we would really like to get and hear from many more of you that may be able to speak or share today. So please, if you're willing to take a few minutes and fill out that survey when we end.

And again, our job today is to listen. We will be collecting all of the information that we gather today, and in the survey, and in probably many other ways. And we'll be creating something, likely a fact sheet or some other resource or resources that will help all of us do the work better.

So let's get started with some sharing and listening. And let's start out with a really general question. So what types of challenges are you experiencing in serving LGBTQ survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Again, you can share through the chats. You can share through raising your hand, and Charity or Jackie will let us know if there's a hand, and they will unmute you. So again, the question is, what types of challenges are you experiencing serving LGBTQ survivors during this time of COVID-19? So Charity, are there any hands that might want to contribute by voice?

CHARITY HOPE: I don't see hands quite yet. I see a couple of chats popping up.

MICHAEL MUNSON: OK. And I am seeing, someone has mentioned shelter for trans people. What other challenges are people experiencing? And we can certainly start with looking at shelter for trans people or for lesbian, gay, and bi folks as well. Different challenges for both, for all of those letters.

And Charity, since you said that you were able to see a couple of comments, I'm only seeing that one comment. If you're able to share any of the other ones that I'm not seeing, I would appreciate that.

CHARITY HOPE: None other right now, Michael. Oh, there's a couple more popping up as we speak.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Great. So someone else is writing, "Some shelters are excluding LGBT members." We are definitely seeing that as well. Charity, this looks like a good spot that maybe we can do poll number two instead of poll number one.

So just a reminder, we're going to start a poll. And if it's in the middle of the interpreter's box, you can drag that poll over to the side. And just to help folks be able to see and understand what the poll is, let me read the poll out for folks. And if you can take a minute to just vote, and I believe you can check more than one.

So the question is, shelter and housing can pose difficulties for LGBTQ survivors in the best of times. What have you experienced now during the COVID-19 pandemic? So the first one is, no change in housing placement, still being able to get folks in to shelter. Two is no housing options are available. 3, only hotel placements are available.

Four, restricted or limited access to shelters based on symptoms or illness status of the survivor. 5, restrictions for advocate involvement in shelter placement. So can advocates still accompany survivors to shelters and act as a role of advocate? Or six, some other issues that you can share in the chat.

So let's just give people 30 seconds or so to contribute to that poll. And you can continue to add more content into the chat as well. So folks can keep on voting. I'm going to leave the poll up if we can for a minute, just so that I can continue to see the results.

Zoom is a little bit funky about how they share the results. So it looks like many of you, 42%, are saying that there is restricted or limited access to shelter based on symptoms or illness status of the individuals. And the second highest looks like it's no housing options are available. And that's tied to restrictions for advocate involvement in shelter placement. And Charity, if you want to close the poll, that would be super helpful.

So we're also seeing in the chat that somebody has said that there's a challenge in finding longer term counseling resources that are LGBT-specific. So we will grab on to that in just a second. Would folks be willing to share what kinds of limitations they're seeing around access to shelter based on symptoms or illness? Would anybody like to raise your hand and share verbally?

Or for those of you checked restrictions for advocate involvement in shelter placement, would you like to share what your experiences have been? Because we at FORGE have definitely heard both of those things to be true in us being able to find shelter placements. That's just not being-- people are just not

taking in any new clients right now as well as not being-- not allowing advocates to enter the space when there is a space available. Charity, any hands up yet?

CHARITY HOPE: No. I'm not seeing any hands.

MICHAEL MUNSON: OK. Well, I would encourage folks to offer some additional information in the chat box as well for how you're experiencing shelter that might be different now than it has been prior to the pandemic. Again, we at FORGE have definitely seen, and across the country, that people are really having additional layers of challenges.

So we know that trans folks oftentimes have really a difficult time accessing shelter no matter when or where. Same with a lot of gay men, bi men, trans men. Lesbian women, not always so difficult. But what are some of those additional challenges now?

This is rare, when people are quiet. So I'll take quiet as we might have more questions than answers. All right. So someone's writing, "We have outreach advocates and shelter advocates. Right now our outreach advocates are somewhat restricted from shelter to assist with social distancing. This creates less support for folks." Definitely.

And someone writes-- OK. That's great. So it sounds like some people might be getting kicked off of chat. So hopefully that will get resolved as things go backwards. All right.

So one of the things that I think a lot of us know is that when folks are living with their abusers, they might be experiencing more abuse if they're being required to shelter in place or stay at home. I'm wondering if folks are seeing an increase in calls or contact to your agencies around the challenges that abusers might be experiencing, or sorry, survivors might be experiencing increased abuse while sheltering in place. Definitely seeing some yeses there.

Can folks share what kinds of things you're seeing? What are you hearing or seeing that might be specific to LGBTQ folks or in the services that you can provide to folks who are experiencing increased need? So I'm seeing that some folks are saying that there's a decrease in hotline calls but maybe an increase in the amount of victimization that's happening at home.

So someone is writing that they're not allowed to meet with clients in first hand exams for forensic exams. So it limits how much time and availability they are-- they have to support folks. So other folks are seeing that their hotlines remain about the same.

So it sounds like some folks are seeing an increase, some are about the same, and some might actually have a decrease. And we don't know necessarily why any of that is. Do folks have ideas? Have folks heard that maybe people can't get through or people don't know how to get help? So some other folks are saying that they're limited for exams as well for sexual assault.

So someone is writing that they've heard that the abuser has more control over survivors in their day-to-day activities. That makes a lot of sense. If the abuser is home all the time-- oops, and that's scrolled up-- it leaves victims more vulnerable. There's less of a chance to call if you're with an abuser. Exactly. So that might be a part of the reason that there's lower volume of calls for some folks.

So there's a decrease in new clients compared to pre-COVID. So opening clients have been in contact more, but new clients may be less. Excellent comments in the chat. And I won't read all of them, because they're scrolling a little bit too fast.

So I'm curious if folks-- I think it's a great comment that if folks are living with their abuser, they aren't able to pick up the phone and call, if that would be their normal way. Are agencies offering additional ways that survivors could make access, could have access to your agency, that could be a little bit safer than picking up the phone? So somebody's saying, yes, with text. Excellent.

And we know that there are some safer texting options. And I know a lot of us are scrambling right now to figure out how to provide safety and still provide access for our clients. So several people are saying text and chat options, Facebook messages. Exactly.

What other ways are folks being able to communicate with their clients? Right. Someone is noting that the abuser could certainly be monitoring someone's chat, or Facebook, or other internet access as well.

Loree's going to post a couple of things in the chat as resources. We also may want to post, Loree or Charity, techsafety.org or techsafety.com. I can't remember which one it is that offers some safety options for how chat can be a little bit safer than general texting.

So I'm seeing a couple of comments, as we move forward, about how we may want to help folks with safety planning. And obviously, we're living in a very different time where people, again, may be living with their abusers, much more so 24 hours a day than they would normally be living with their abusers. How are folks safety planning with their clients, new clients or old clients?

So it sounds like we may not be having as much voice contact, because of some safety. We might be texting or chatting. Can we

engage with safety planning with a client if we have some limited access, or the abuser might be seeing that interaction? And Charity, I'm just going to ask again, are there any hands that have been raised?

CHARITY HOPE: I'm not seeing any hands that are raised, Michael. But I'm also suspecting that Zoom's having a very bad day today. So it could be that folks are limited in their function. Well, actually, I should rephrase that. Zoom is having a rough couple weeks right now. So we may be having some tech issues that we're not aware of.

MICHAEL MUNSON: OK, not a problem. I mean, not a problem on my end, but I'm sorry if people are experiencing some difficulties in raising your hands and us not being able to see them. Somebody wrote in, "Having survivors identify or create a safer room in their home. No room may be perfectly safe during an incident of violence, but there's always a way to make rooms safer." So that's excellent. Excellent suggestion.

If you're speaking with a person, you could ask yes and no questions. Exactly. So we may not know if an abuser is listening in, but we could at least allow them to not have to speak something that might be revealing or dangerous.

One of the things that I'd like to suggest is that sometimes, if we have a safe chat or a safe texting option, we could send the

clients to some of the safety planning tools that are online. Obviously, that still has some online risk potential for them, but folks could look at their own safety planning maybe without as much help from an advocate or as much direct support. So I'm curious if folks-- if that is something that folks have tried or if that is less effective for folks.

So a couple of people have asked, what are suggestions for making specific rooms safer? That's an excellent question. So I'm curious if the person that originally posed that would be willing to share what kind of strategies people can use in their homes or apartments.

CHARITY HOPE: And this is Charity. We'd be happy to unmute if that is going to be easier.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Thank you, Charity. That's-- sometimes typing--

CHARITY HOPE: Have we--

MICHAEL MUNSON: --takes a long time.

CHARITY HOPE: I know. I think it's Marcus. I'm going to unmute you, Marcus, just in case you would like to share.

MARKUS: Hello?

CHARITY HOPE: Hi, Markus. We can hear you.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Hi.

MARKUS: Hi. How are you?

CHARITY HOPE: We're great. Thanks for allowing us to unmute you.

MARKUS: Of course! So what I meant by that, and I was-- you were right, I was mid-typing my answer, and it was quite long. So some tips that I have for creating a safer room in a survivor's home.

First off, you want to pick a room that doesn't have a lot of objects that could be used as weapons, of course. So, for instance, a kitchen, that's not a safer room, because there's knives. There may be other objects that are easily thrown, and we want to limit that exposure during any incident of violence. And we don't want there to be any other items that could be used as weapons.

Another tip, too, is picking a room that is easy to access outside of the home. So you want to pick a room that's near the exit of a home or near a phone or something like that. It's going to be on a case by case basis which room is safest and what a survivor considers a safe room. They may consider a bathroom a safe room because they feel comfortable there, but there's other logistical means that make a room safer than other rooms.

MICHAEL MUNSON: That is excellent. Do you have anything more that you'd like to add? That's a perfect-- that's a really wonderful list.

MARKUS: No. I think that's it for now.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Great. Thank you so much for sharing.

MARKUS: You're welcome. Of course.

MICHAEL MUNSON: And we're going to take--

CHARITY HOPE: Thanks!

MICHAEL MUNSON: --just a moment to switch interpreters.

CHARITY HOPE: Thanks, Michael. And we're switching both our American Sign Language interpreters as well as our spoken language interpreter. So we're going to take just a little bit of time.

MICHAEL MUNSON: And someone can give me a heads up, please, when you are ready to roll.

CHARITY HOPE: Just one more second.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Yep. Another second. Yep.

Are we switched with Spanish interpreters? Are we ready to move on?

CHARITY HOPE: It would be maybe just-- this is Charity. Sorry. May need just one more second.

MICHAEL MUNSON: No problem.

CHARITY HOPE: All right. We're ready.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Right. So why don't we switch gears a little bit and look at support groups? We know that we had-- there's a great many discussion on abuse, and abuse in homes, and what we do around some of those intimate partner violence situations. Let's look at support groups, since many more of us may offer support groups for our clients.

Charity, are you able to pull the first poll up, please? So again, the reminder is as the poll comes up, you can move it to a space on your screen that makes it accessible for you if you need an interpreter and the poll. So the poll asks, if you're used to hosting in-person support groups, what changes have you made due to physical distancing? You can choose multiple.

So first one is continuing to host in-person support groups, provide one-on-one supports, having video conferencing support groups, have chat-based support groups, have phone-based support groups. Number six-- I haven't been numbering them-- six is canceled some or all of your support groups. Or seven, you don't host support groups.

So it's interesting that a lot of you are not-- you don't host support groups. And let me just give another 20 or so seconds for people to contribute their answers. So it's looking like those of you who do host support groups, looks like 23% have moved or offer video conferencing support groups.

About the same number of people have canceled some or all of your support groups. I'm happy from a health perspective that no one is continuing in-person support groups. But certainly, some states would still allow that to happen. And then some of you are offering either more one-on-one support. Thank you for taking the poll.

Did any of those things prompt questions, or comments, or issues for folks around how you're offering support groups that used to be in-person? How are you filling those gaps? I know many of you don't offer support groups. But those that do, what are you doing instead, or how are you providing these types of support?

So again, you can raise your hand, which may or may not work. You can type in the chat. So anything about support groups and how that is playing out differently now during the COVID-19 pandemic.

So let me pose a couple of ideas. So I saw many people were saying that they're using video. And we know that different video options are safer than others. Some of them are more accessible

to our clients than others. And I'm not talking just about disability accessibility, but what do people have on their phones, or how can they interact?

So someone's offering, the advocates that do hold support groups with us have been doing a one-to-one phone contact or video with attendees. That's excellent. So some of what we're seeing is that, because not everybody has access to online, we might need to do some more one-on-one connections with folks, either video or phone, or we're moving everything into an online space right now.

So just curious how that looks for you all, if survivors are feeling as safe in those environments, more safe, less safe, if different kinds of issues are coming up. If it was a support group that was intended for discussing sexual assault, are-- is the current pandemic being what's discussed versus sexual assault? What's happening?

So someone's writing, "Our community center is using videos but are having problems with hate groups breaking into the chat." That's really unfortunate. We're working on how we can offer options for clients. Right now, I believe some people are working on a podcast. Excellent. So those are some options, right? Podcasts, which might be a one way push out.

Someone's writing, "Our sexual assault support group has tried to facilitate video-based calls, but it's been unsuccessful due to clients not having a safe space." So that this person is saying that they've moved to more of a one-on-one support for the time being. That makes a lot of sense, because we can't tell people anymore to go to a library in a private room, because the libraries are not open, or some of the places where people used to have safer internet access, they can't go anymore.

Are people finding-- this is both for support groups and for one-on-one contact-- that LGBTQ clients are having different needs that they're presenting with? So some of the things that I am thinking about are, I know in our practice, we've seen more people needing help with accessing public benefits or not knowing how to apply for unemployment insurance or unemployment. So those are the things that people are coming forward with rather than about their victimization.

So I'm wondering if other folks have seen that shift or if clients are just continuing just to have the same needs as before. And again, Charity, I'm going to ask if any hands have been raised.

CHARITY HOPE: Unfortunately, I don't see any hands raised, Michael. But I stand at the ready to you unmute anyone who does.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Thank you. Someone's writing in the chat box that, yes, unemployment, child support, and food stamps. So more clients have been asking about unemployment and child support.

So some people are seeing more questions around what's going on in the present day. Financial security is a major concern. So I'm going to ask Loree, who's FORGE's back end on this, to maybe post some of the links on poverty and assets around finances into the chat box, please.

Some other people are saying that they most just need emotional support because of COVID. Survivors' needs are being compounded by job loss and threat of eviction. So, many things, again, are layering in for folks. So reproductive health, food banks, and pantries.

Exactly. "PTSD is bad among victims," somebody else is writing. And are folks feeling able and ready, are providers, you as providers feeling able and ready to address some of these needs that we've never had to deal with before, at least not at this scale? So I think we have-- sometimes we have our clients' needs which are new and emerging, but we also have our needs that we may not know how to necessarily provide the services that they need.

Someone is writing that most of their clients are undocumented and have a lot of questions regarding employment status and the stimulus refund. Definitely. Other ways that people are seeing challenges or concerns around providing those basic life needs for folks on top of or in addition to their victimization needs?

Again, you can raise your hand. You can type in the chat box. And again, you're all a quiet bunch, and that's OK, too.

I think that part of this is a sign of how challenging this time is. I think some of us have many answers to these things. But many of us are really kind of befuddled by, hey, I didn't know my job as an advocate was to help people with unemployment. Sometimes that is our job, but a lot of times that's not our job.

And so we're having to learn new skills. We're having to learn new technology. I'm curious if folks are experiencing challenges with that, for example, of learning new technology in order to continue to do the work.

So someone is mentioning that, as a court based advocate, it's stressful for people that court dates are being rescheduled, and some are getting incorrect information. And they cannot get an order of protection at this time. That would be very troubling for a survivor.

CHARITY HOPE: Michael, we also have a hand raised. I'm excited to report.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Yay!

CHARITY HOPE: Geneva, I have unmuted your line. I'm trying, Geneva, to unmute you. We haven allowed-- it's called talking permitted in Zoom. And you may have to-- oh, great. You're unmuted now.

GENEVA: OK. Can you hear me now?

MICHAEL MUNSON: Yes. I can hear you.

CHARITY HOPE: I can.

GENEVA: I really wanted to talk about two separate things here. I work with a lot of LGBTQ seniors in that EQMI works with all victimization, not only sexual abuse or sexual violence. And the seniors that I work with that are trying to find resources are not technically inclined. And so quite often now, I find myself doing face to face on phone and showing on my computers like, watch my hands. This is what I'm doing. And that's what I'm doing.

So that's one major thing, is technology for an older generation. You can get all this help. Just go on the computer, and fill this out. And that freaks them out. And they get-- how am I going to survive, or how am I going to do this?

The other thing that I wanted to talk about is, as far as sexual violence and safety plans, is that, now I work out of Detroit, Michigan. And a lot of our sexual violence victims are not domestic violence. And a lot of our victims are LGBTQ people working in the sex trade and are not documented, are not going to get a stimulus, and obviously aren't making a lot of money right now, and which is unfortunate because they're in survival mode anyways. So it's very hard to get them services.

It's extra hard getting them into shelters that are pretty much crowded, even the resources we use on a regular basis. Also EQMI, the advocates are very-- they will go to different resources before they send-- before we send our victims, because we don't want our victims to be re-victimized. And now having to use other resources, being quarantined, I can't always guarantee that they're-- even though I'll call them, I can't always guarantee that they'll be accepted. And so I find that to be a challenge and also a worry.

So those are the three major things that I'm seeing right now when you talk about challenges, is the technical challenge, the-- for seniors, the safety plans that we've had to go back, and rearrange, and talk one on one about, and just finding resources for people that don't have all of the state IDs, the different things that shelters and everything will ask for, or IDs that don't match their identity. Those are two things that are really rough because

we have had people that are transgender victimized once they go into a shelter, and their ID says their birth gender, and they present as their gender. So we're finding a lot of challenges. We're continuing to work on it.

There's only three of us that are advocates, and we cover the whole state of Michigan. And so it is working with other LGBTQ organizations that we're finding our safety net, that we're all coming together. There was a sense of competition, and that's gone away. So that's a plus. It's like, let's all pull together and work for our community. But that's just what I wanted to say as far as challenges go.

MICHAEL MUNSON: That's excellent. Thank you so much for sharing. And I think that some of the things that you bring up are just fantastic around seniors. I know we've got a couple of resources that we can share. And if you're not able to see them in the chat, we will send them out to everybody, and they'll be posted on [reachingvictims.org](http://reachingvictims.org) as well.

But the senior thing is just amazing because we've got people that don't know how to use the internet. And so, how can we help folks access the resources that are available to them if we can't meet in person? So your suggestion of doing things and sharing your screen is really brilliant. So thank you for sharing that. Do other folks have some solutions or some comments around, if we just take that first piece around seniors, LGBT seniors?

CHARITY HOPE: Michael, this is Charity.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Any comments?

CHARITY HOPE: I see another hand raised. Alicia, I'm going to unmute you. You are unmuted.

ALICIA: OK. Can you hear me?

CHARITY HOPE: We can.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Yes.

ALICIA: All right. So this is more of a question that I just didn't want to type out. I was just wondering how maybe Geneva or how some of the other participants are-- so I work with more of a coalition with survivors, not specific to the LGBTQ community. But as a queer woman, I am having trouble, even before all the COVID stuff, but having trouble getting through to the other members and groups of the coalition the urgency and the different struggles that the queer victims are facing, mostly just pretty much being ignored by many members of the coalition, I would say.

MICHAEL MUNSON: That is really tough, isn't it, when certain populations and, in this case, queer LGBT folks, are being ignored or not-- our needs not being recognized as valid or as strongly as needed. That's very difficult. And I think a couple of things have

come up. It sounds like your comment is really a generalized one about LGBTQ folks.

And Geneva brought up some specifics around elders, around folks that might be engaging in survival behaviors, so street economy, or folks that are undocumented. So again, those are those additional layers that we've got where either our co-workers or our coalitions are not paying enough attention or paying as much attention as we would like them to, or the systems or the structures are not set up to work with those who are marginalized within the margins.

Do other folks have some thoughts on that? And I'm glad people are able to raise your hands, and it's good to hear other people's voices. Someone's asking in the chat box, "How are people supporting clients who do sex work?" It's a really good question. Charity, are you seeing the hand that I'm seeing?

CHARITY HOPE: I am, and I'm going to-- this is Charity. It's going to take just one more second. C.J., I'm going to actually turn on your video. So it'll take me just a moment to get C.J. up.

C.J.: Great. Making sure folks can see me. Hello, everyone. My name's C.J. I'm looking for resources for agencies and organizations that serve survivors. And now, some of those agencies and organizations are really not competent in working with LGBTIQ folks.

Now, as COVID-19 pandemic is happening, there's a lot of conferences that have been canceled and other events. And I'm wondering if there's any resources or webinars for those agencies, so we can train them to support our deaf LGBTQ survivors better. That's my question. Thanks so much.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Excellent question. Thank you. Do other folks have some suggestions? Because C.J. is correct. There's a lot of conferences that have been canceled. There's certainly a lot of webinars that have taken their place or popped up. We would love to hear what resources folks have if people are willing to add them to the chat box. And again, we will send out--

CHARITY HOPE: Michael, this is--

MICHAEL MUNSON: Yeah. Go ahead, Charity.

CHARITY HOPE: Yes, sir. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off. I just wanted to let you know that we also have a couple of hands raised. Now, these hands were raised--

MICHAEL MUNSON: Excellent.

CHARITY HOPE: --prior to this question. So folks might be weighing in on something else. But Caitlyn, I'm going to unmute you.

CAITLYN: Hi. This is Caitlyn Call. I accidentally raised my hand.  
I'm sorry.

CHARITY HOPE: Caitlyn, OK. No worries. I'm muting you, then, back again. All right. That was a false alarm, everyone, on the hand raise. Geneva, I'm going to unmute you again. Jackie, I wonder if you could help me. Oh, there we go.

GENEVA: The whole COVID-19 right now, our organization, we-- all of the advocate in some different spaces-- we make bags with hand sanitizer, food, some money, wash cloths, soap, just everything we can think of, little snack bars. They've just totally made up bags. And in our cars with our masks and our gloves, we go to where they know us, we know them. And be like, OK, we're setting this on the table for you so that you have something.

If we can't get you into a shelter or anything else, then that's-- it doesn't seem like a lot, but in the grand scheme of things, it's as an advocate what we're called to do, is make sure our victims are OK. So there's been two or three organizations, Transgender Sister of Color is one major one, but also EQMI, that we're putting the bags together and taking them to the parks and places where we know our victims are working. So that's one way that we can do it.

MICHAEL MUNSON: That is really super. That's a really great suggestion and certainly a suggestion that those of us who have spare time and want to connect with folks, like your agency and like others that are supporting folks who are engaged in sex work, that's a great-- a really great suggestion of how to engage in, and check in with folks, and offer them something that's really practical and useful. Thank you for sharing that. Charity, was there-- I don't see another hand, right? No other hands yet?

CHARITY HOPE: No other hands. Yeah.

MICHAEL MUNSON: So I'm seeing some other suggestions of people are supporting families by delivering food boxes, hygiene supplies, resources and information that we get out about other places to help. That's great. I believe C.J.'s question-- and C.J., you can correct me if I'm wrong, because somebody asked for a repeat-- was where LGBT folks or LGBT deaf folks in particular are being able to access things if conferences are being canceled. Is that correct?

CHARITY HOPE: C.J., did you want to pop back on video?

C.J.: Hello again. So my question is that, now, these conference and trainings that are canceled are for those who would be supporting LGBTQ deaf people or LGBTQ people. So it's not for the LGBTQ population; it's for people who provide support to them.

I live in Utah. It's a very conservative state, and there's a lot of barriers around LGBTQ supports. So I'm trying to remove those obstacles. Now, there were trainings and sessions that were specifically for that, to make people more savvy in supporting LGBTQ people. And those have been canceled. So I want to think about resources available to those agencies, so they can support those communities better.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Perfect. Thank you for restating. And sorry that I did not fully capture the first time. So that's the restated question. If folks have things to suggest, that would be lovely. I also want to remind folks that the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims does a lot of work with deaf folks. And I'm certain that there will be some online webinar-like sessions that will be useful in that process.

And I'm aware of what time it is. And I'm seeing that we-- there's a possibility that we may offer this session again. And Charity, you can pop in with a yes or no to that. But that is definitely a possibility, to either continue this discussion or we had to cap attendance. So that is certainly a possibility.

CHARITY HOPE: Thanks, Michael. So hello. It's Charity again. We had some tech issues with folks getting in today. I suspect that, as many folks are aware, Zoom has been having lots of security issues of late. I know someone mentioned in the chat earlier,

support groups actually getting invaded by folks disrupting those events.

So although Zoom is a great platform in some ways, I think as they are adjusting their security settings, it's led us to have a couple of hiccups today. We rolled with that, and we were able to have a great conversation, but just wanted to let folks know that since some people weren't able to get in, that we'd be absolutely open to offering another one of these sessions.

We had a huge interest. We had about 150, 175 people on today, which is fantastic. But we know that there are lots more folks also interested in attending. Michael, if you're open to it, I think we should offer up another one of these sessions--

MICHAEL MUNSON: Definitely.

CHARITY HOPE: --to make sure that everyone that wants to participate in these conversations can. So we'll work out those details and send that back out.

MICHAEL MUNSON: Perfect. Thanks, Charity. So I'm mindful of what time it is, and I'd like to make sure that we wrap up on time. And we will be sending out some materials so that you all have information about if, and when, and how we will connect again in this format as well as some resources that we may push out.

So as we wrap up today, I really want to thank the folks at Vera, especially Charity who's been being called on repeatedly to unmute people and all of that good stuff. Y'all are really amazing all the time, both on the front end and the back end. I also wanted to thank our interpreters who always do a really good job. And I'm sure the Spanish folks are doing a really good job that we can't see, but it's always exciting to have multiple forms of access when we do these kinds of things.

And thank you, everybody, for being here. I know it's a really busy time for folks and a really stressful time. And it really means a lot to me and to the National Resource Center that you joined us today for this time. And we know that this is just a fraction, just a little tip of the conversation that we will continue to have then. I can promise you that we will have more conversations and more dialogue in the next days, and weeks, and probably months. We will not give up, and we will be here.

Just a reminder that we will-- as soon as we are finished today, you'll get popped up with a survey. And we really, really, really would like to hear your thoughts. Answer as many or as few questions as you'd like. We will take them all, and read them all, and hopefully construct something useful to push back out for all of us to benefit from.

So thank you, everybody, for being here. And thank you for being there for your clients in this really unusual time that we're in. And

again, we really appreciate all of your input today and look forward to connecting with you in the future. Thanks, everybody.

CHARITY HOPE: Thank you, Michael.