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The Arc

Webinar

Assisting Crime Victims with Disabilities

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>> My name is Kathryn Walker and I will be today's facilitator. Before we began our presentation I would like to go over a few housekeeping rules, especially for those of you who are new to WebEx. Because there are so many of you, we are currently in listen only mode. At any time during the presentation, if you need assistance, you can post a question on the checkbox on the side of your screen, and we will be happy to assist you. At the end of the session, there will be time for questions. You can either post questions to the Q&A session or raise your hand using your icon at the bottom of the participant window and we will call on people. You can also email questions. If we don’t get to your question at the end of the presentation, we will be sure to follow up with you afterwards. This is being recorded and will be posted on our website. We will send you an email letting you know when it is available. During the presentation you will be asked to answer questions. This is involvement is for our funders, so please participate.

The Webinar today is a fourth of a series of webinars featuring Dr. Rosemary Hughes and Sgt. Michael Sullivan. We have one final request before we begin. You will receive a session evaluation immediately following this webinar, please take the five minutes to complete and get this to us. This webinar is reported from funding from the United States department of justice Bureau and it is very important for the Arc do have a bit of an understanding of what you have learned and how you plan to use the information. Thank you for your attendance and participation, please welcome Dr. Hughes and Sgt. Sullivan.

Dr. Hughes I think you have to mute your cell.

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: Thank you Kathryn, and good morning. Greetings from Montana. This is Rosemary Hughes from the University of Montana in Missoula. My co-presenter today, as Kathryn said, is retired Sgt. Michael Sullivan. We are honored to have this opportunity today to share our work and that of our colleagues on the crime victimization of people with disabilities and Deaf people. For purposes of accessibility, we will read the information and describe the images on our slides. Much of the information presented today was generated by a large project, a parent project, called The Identification and Reporting of Violence by Persons with Disabilities. It was a five year research project funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the US Department of Education. The award was made to Oregon Health & Science University and it was a collaboration among Oregon Health & Science University, Portland State University, Baylor College of Medicine, and the University of Montana. The principal investigator was Dr. Laurie Powers until she relocated to Portland State University, at which time Dr. Mary Ann Curry assumed the role of principal investigator. At the very end of this slide presentation we will have a list of all team members.

This project involved three major studies: First the National Crime Reporting Survey, which involved a survey of 133 police departments across the country. Although we are not going into detail on that study today, we did find out that most of those departments did not have a specific protocol and procedures for responding to people with disabilities and people with disabilities who were crime victims. The second study was The Violence Screening Safety and Reporting Study. This study was an evaluation of a computerized abuse and safety assessment intervention with 305 women with disabilities. The third one, the Crime Reporting Facilitators and Barriers study, is the study we will focus on today and will describe later on in the presentation.

Our learning objectives for today's webinar are to review background information on crime reporting by people with disabilities. Second, to discuss findings from two focus group studies on crime reporting by people with disabilities and Deaf people. And to discuss recommendations for increasing the reporting of crime by people with disabilities.

By way of background, the first thing I would like to mention is that on this slide there is a photo of a woman using a wheelchair and looking out the window with a threatening figure in the background. And according to the National Sheriffs' Association, "Perpetrators specifically target this population under the assumption that victims will be unable to escape or report the crime." And that statement is supported by a great deal of research.

Here is our first polling question. We want to ask, Crime victims with disabilities may not report to law enforcement for which of the following reasons? A, fear that they may not be understood. B, lack of support or confusion during the initial and follow-up investigation. And C, unable to obtain accommodations and D, all of the above?

Okay Dr. Hughes, back to you.

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: Thank you everybody for doing that. We know from a great deal of research that there are barriers to reporting that involve fears and concerns of people with disabilities. On the slide is a photo of a woman using a wheelchair and looking off into the distance. People with disabilities have reported concerns about retaliation by the offender and continued victimization and have expressed the fear of losing social or disability-related services were they to report. Loss of independence and a loss of support, and for people who have offenders who are also serving as their caregivers. If that person were to be removed from the home, that could leave them without support for essential activities of daily living, such as bathing or dressing.

And the last concern is inclusion of disability in the public record. Fear that if the information were disclosed that it could result in discrimination in housing and employment and other major parts of their lives.

Other barriers include beliefs and perception, such as futility. People will say, what's the use? There aren't any accommodations for us, the facility, shelter or whatever is not accessible and what help will we get if we call and what benefit will we receive by reporting crime to the police? Also they report that police lack training in interpersonal violence and often attribute violence to a problem for medical providers or social service providers. And, then also the police lack training in disability; they lack the skills to communicate with people with disabilities and Deaf people. For example, Deaf people may be reaching for a paper and pencil to communicate to the officer and the officer misinterprets that thinking they're reaching for a weapon and act accordingly. Police lack training in disability and that will be mentioned over and over in our talk today and something that the police want to receive. Other barriers to reporting: mobility or communication limitations. People may not have access to a telephone or not have access to their neighbors’ home where they can go to use a phone or get assistance with reporting. People with disabilities experience extreme levels of social and physical isolation, and then also the lack of knowledge about the criminal justice system: how does it work and how the reporting works and what happens with the investigation or in the prosecution phase etc. There is a need to have accessible information provided to people with disabilities so that they can increase their understanding of what will happen when they report the crime.

Other barriers to reporting include shame and self-blame and even guilt for the victimization, reluctance to report family members or caregivers and difficulty identifying behaviors as abusive. For people who have experienced abuse throughout their lives, it becomes a normalized experience and they may not label it as abuse. Here is our second polling question: Myths, stereotypes and lack of knowledge can affect law enforcement contacts with people with disabilities. Which of the following is true? People with intellectual disabilities don't make good witnesses? Crime victims who take psychiatric medications are unable to assist in the prosecution of their case? More time may be necessary when interviewing a crime victim with disability? Or none of the above?

>> Kathryn Walker: Dr. Hughes, back to you.

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: Thank you. Thank you Kathryn and thank you everyone. So on this slide is a photo of a man signing into the hand of a Deaf and Blind man. Dr. Petersilia and others have pointed out that police face multiple barriers to responding to crime victims with disabilities, including the identification of disability which is difficult because they have not possibly had training to recognize that somebody has a disability. Communication barriers and reluctance to share information with people with disabilities, and as we mentioned before, they may be reluctant to share that they have a disability or other information that could potentially harm them. Lack of knowledge and training and experience on the part of the police and concern about witness credibility.

The Crime Reporting Study. We conducted the Crime Reporting Study to identify barriers and facilitators to crime reporting by people with disabilities. It involved two qualitative studies, asking similar questions of both crime victims and police. We asked questions about barriers and facilitators and several related questions. Who was involved? We conducted a separate focus group study with people with disabilities that involved 52 people with disabilities and 10 focus groups and seven individual interviews which were conducted for purposes of accommodation. The focus group study Two was with law enforcement officers, and there were 25 law enforcement officers who participated in one of five focus groups. And so you know, we wanted people with disabilities who had actually reported their crime to the police, so these were crime victims with disabilities – crime survivors, if you will. And then law enforcement – we wanted law-enforcement officers who had experience in working with crime victims with disabilities and/or personal experience with disabilities themselves or disability in their families. Where? Into Northwestern states.

So the findings from focus group one were published by Becky Child and colleagues in 2011 and the title was Understanding the Experience of Crime Victims with Disabilities and Deaf Victims. In this photo we have a picture of a woman leaning over, looking very distressed with her arms on her legs and one hand to her forehead, talking to someone who is taking notes or taking a report. The key findings from our crime reporting study are listed here. These are things that we will go into some detail on the following slides. Disability Identification and Disclosure. Victim Understanding and Involvement. Credibility and Victim Blaming. Misunderstandings and Stereotypes. Communication Challenges. Accommodations and Support. Intersectionality and History. And then overall recommendations by people with disabilities. Remember, this study that we are talking about here was a study we did with a focus groups with people with of disabilities and Deaf people. There were concerns, many concerns, such as those with mental health disabilities or brain injuries or blind people or Deaf people, the people whose disabilities were not readily visible reported not receiving appropriate support and not being treated equitably following disclosure as other people.

Disclosure of disability. Concerns about storing and collecting disability information. This one person said, "They talked to my caseworker. They talked to people at the nursing agency. They talked to my son and I thought that was kind of invasive for somebody who was a victim." Victim understanding and involvement: people reported that they don't understand the reporting and investigation processes, that they experienced confusion over plea-bargaining. And on this slide is a picture of a woman who is looking very distressed and holding her head in her hands with her eyes closed. In terms of plea-bargaining, on this slide, we have a photo of a man holding a frying pan and apparently going to hit with it and the quote, "In the end I said, how could you reduce these to high misdemeanors? He could have killed me. I felt that death was ready to come at me right at that moment. I could hear the clang, clang, clang… as he banged me each time with a frying pan."

Credibility and victim blaming. On this slide we have a photo of a person who is blind and holding a baby. The quote is, "The first thing I asked was, what did you do to cause this? And you know, what I did was I was blind… And immediately being told, we don't need to get any information from you because you can't identify the person…" So people are stereotyped and are not – the police don’t seem to have the skills to ask the kinds of questions that people who have visual impairment or people who are blind can answer—what did you smell, what did the person feel like--those kinds of questions that definitely could be answered and result in a full reporting.

Misunderstanding and stereotypes. There is a photo on the slide of a man crawling through a window of a building and the quote – "I’m a Vet. I can say that when I am going make a complaint, well, are you sure it's not Gulf War syndrome or some sort of post-traumatic stress syndrome? No, somebody is crawling through my window!" People with disabilities often tell us that they feel more like a criminal than a victim of crime when being – when having this type of question thrown at them.

Communication challenges reported by people who are crime victims say that officers talk too rapidly and use language that is hard to understand. "They don't have a clue that they could lose you in just a couple of words… Before you get the chance to say anything, they interrupt you."

And communication challenges, and this was a quote from a Deaf crime victim. "I would suggest that when they would investigate my case, for example, they're willing to use email for me, but the DA, he said he wouldn't communicate with me that way, so I didn't know that they had closed my case until one year later." So again, asking for accommodations and be refused and then not getting the information that is necessary.

On this slide we have photos of five people with differing disabilities and one criminal justice personnel justice person taking notes. The accommodation and supports by people with disabilities are the need for use of their medication, for personal assistance, for interpreters, for accessible facilities, assistance with paperwork, and attention to communication needs. Of all those, the lack of interpreters was most consistently reported.

Intersectionality and history. Intersectionality, for example, between race and disability, or it could be any number of intersectionalities. The treatment across multiple identities, came up in many of the interviews, and basically people were saying that they would worry about being profiled. There was an African American woman who said she would be more concerned about reporting and being racially profiled than disclosing disability to the police, and she would prefer to go to her family to disclose to her family. And past experiences with law enforcement and hearing about treatment brutality from police officers to other people in the disability community is a deterrent to reporting.On this slide there is a photo of a man sitting in his wheelchair and looking off thoughtfully.

Let's see where we are now. The recommendations by crime victims with disabilities were to establish disability liaison. They were saying that can be with disability services or disability organizations or social services, a social worker for example. Increase disability sensitivity training among law enforcement officers. Arrange informal and formal interactions; instead of just meeting the police when having to do a crime report or some other process with criminal justice, having informal meetings in the community or maybe a class where they could learn about each other's needs and experiences. And then assure accessible information. For example, somebody mentioned a brochure that would be available in alternate formats and distributed by the police to the disability community.

I think that kind of ends my part, and I'm sorry my camera didn't work, but now I turn it over to officer Sullivan – Sgt. Sullivan for his part, and I believe he has a camera.

>> Sgt. (retired) Michael Sullivan: Good afternoon everyone. I am retired Sgt. Sullivan. This part of the session, [indiscernable] the rest of the story Paul Harvey would say, I just dated myself. I would like to apologize in advance for anyone who is signing and trying to keep up with me on captions – I talk fast and it is a curse and a gift.

The backside of the story, the other side of the story is I will be reading quotes and talking about them a little bit. The first one is intervention and these are quotes from police officers and sheriffs who are stated in the focus group. “There are so many people who take advantage of everyone with a disability any way they can, whether it is stealing from, them who are living in the area, or even being you know abusive or violent with them. This officer recognized something,

one of the key things that was pointed out is this idea of recognition, so you recognize what is going on and that is a huge start.

Other things that we learned from the officers, is that it is difficulty in identifying

people with disabilities and stereotypes and as you mentioned, how many people have seen the Rain Man? That may be their only impression and preconceived ideas and notions about what people with disabilities look like and act like. People with mental health disabilities is a huge topic and usually important. Officers I hear from have concerns about whether they can ask questions about disability.

Confusion resulting from disability related questions because of misunderstanding the ADA or local laws or HIPPA. Rosemary touched on this. Alternate formatted materials. We also learned from officers about barriers to reporting, what to include in the police reports, knowing how much to include, what to discus about disability and what can you report.

Not including adequate information. I hear from investigators that officers didn't tell them that the person, because of medication shouldn't be called before a certain hour– things like that. Also officers not knowing if the case will be taken to court and that an assessment could be based on some sort of stereotype or a prosecutor may not believe a victim with a disability may make the case difficult to prosecute.

Main reasons for not reporting initially – none were good but that is a reality. Also what happens are concerns whether the district attorney will take the case. Obviously what happens, for me because I am in law enforcement, people may not realize that a police officer or sheriff comes to your house and to take a report and it will probably go to an investigative officer or district attorney and the district attorney will decide if they need more information or whether they will approve the case. Also then once in court, you have attorneys and judges with a lack of training lack

interpreters, or not allow someone to testify because of speech, cognitive ability; all those sorts of things that are not usually seen in courts, because of judges and attorneys don't notice and when they are there, they need to realize they have to change how they operate in the courtroom. There is a moral cost to the victim. All these issues are floating around out there. All of the things I'm going to talk about could be overcome through training and intervention..

We have also talked about effective interviews. This is an ongoing thing. The two big things that I see are time and communication. Do we have adequate time? That is a policy issue. Establishing a rapport is getting in there and realizing that it may take a longer period of time for them to get comfortable with you and you to get comfortable with them. If you are there something terrible has happened and having trained officers who can communicate with victims with disabilities is critical– this is sort of the CIT model going around the United States. Also you need to realize that it's great to have officers trained, but I like the idea, thatall disabilities, across the board, at covered. You need to train everybody to understand this, and we will talk a little bit later on about investigators. Probably the key to everything, and the hardest thing to learn and do is to have patience.

Some other things we've learned from officers is what they felt was the view people with disabilities had about them. They were designated as bad people. Rosemary talked about it, that if someone had a bad experience with the police and you show up again, having nothing to do or any knowledge of what happened before, that will carry over.

The problem with a policy of officer safety first, and the last one unintentional intimidation kind of go hand-in-hand. I'll talk a little bit about focusing that in a minute. If you are going to do any training with law enforcement, you absolutely have to consider officer safety. If I'm not safe, nobody is safe. Here is a way to look at it and have perspective of officers. Intimidation is used to control and one of the bullet points – people who are deaf or worry about being shot and the officer don't know they are deaf. Every police officer has to learn street smarts or whatever you want to call it, but what you want to look at is this, every officer has to have their own personal check of whether they are looking at the good or bad guy, or if a guy is drunk or sober, or on parole or not a parole, or has a weapon or does not have a weapon or they are sweating or agitated – all these things go on and a police officer or deputy sheriff has to think about that and has to size them up in a second and then size them up.

My point is this. Officer training is important, but if you take a look at what officers are looking at on their checklist, what you look at is behavior. When someone has a behavior that doesn't fit in my box, I need to realize that that behavior might be because of a disability, so I have to change my approach to that person. There is another quote, I will read a series of quotes throughout this. Great jumping off points. This is a picture with a person using a guide dog with a harness and a white cane. The quote is, "If we have somebody with a disability, there's nothing here period. It's just not available. It's never been given a thought. And it is needed." This is exactly where the American disabilities act comes into play about providing service.

Another lack of resources identified is fragmentation of services, lack of coordination, inaccurate information and continuously changing services. That is a problem in government, at any rate, and any level. Especially when working with disabilities. The system is very confused. This is also a program issue under the ADA. There is a series of quotes here that I will read from officers that really help focus this down. This first quote from an officer, "You're like, this person drunk or dumb as a rock, and you blow them off and say, why don’t you come on down, you know, stopdrinking, come on down, and will take your report, and maybe is not alcohol at all. Its not that that they're stupid are blowing me off or not paying attention to me, it's that they have a disability." This is what I was talking about a minute ago with my first impression of a person. This is an officer going through a checklist and deciding that something is not fitting and it is different than usual and maybe it is a disability and then go from there.

Another quote is, "What they've been through, some of these people have just been through the system a million times over with very little results. You know, you go through some of the mental health system, or the welfare, or SSI and after a while you come away disappointed. You don't have a lot of faith in the systems or the system in general. So you think, well, why bother? Is it going to help? Is it the same old, same old?" And this is what I was talking about we will talk about in context at the end here.

Another quote, and here is a pair of hands gliding over a braille printout. "The person we are talking to is a victim of a crime, and maybe they don’t feel comfortable communicating with us or we don’t have the skills to communicate with them." goes back to that question every poor and recognizing that that person needs to be worked with and saying something as simple as, you don't feel comfortable here, is there something you need – what is it, tell me what you need. That is an okay thing to do and it's something that seems so obvious and something particularly if it's a fresh crime and you are trying to get information to secure the crime scene, just taking a few seconds and asking them to tell you what they need.

Another quote from an officer – "Are the investigative techniques working with the disabled community different from the working with the rest of the community? And I say absolutely, absolutely. It's hugely different." This is the nail on the head and I've talked about it before – is having the time to communicate and realizing we need to modify and make the interview work in the follow-up work, although things come together.

Another quote. "Instead of asking someone to describe the guy, you can ask questions like, well, who does he remind you of? Well he looks like Chichi from the Rodriguez family on TV, and you can get additional information by simply coming at it from a different approach."

We know that we've heard people with disabilities or cognitive impairments our approach is asking open ended questions. Things like during your interview is you get into this idea that we have a lot of jargon and you might just say, tell me what happened, which allows the person to tell the story. Obviously, there will be bits and pieces where you need to refocus investigative needs and elements of crimes and things like that. My feeling is, instead of having them describe, is asking them to tell you what they look like and what they were wearing.

May be take them back to where the crime occurred and have them stand there and tell the story, and that may jog their memories. If they see the background and may remember where the guy came from or who else may have been on the street or was the store owner standing and the window of the store – right in the line of sight or where the crime occurred? Avoid police jargon. Another mentioned earlier about a blind victim is something as simple as taking them back and having them walk the crime scene.

Unless there are crime scene contamination issues – for example someone follows their path every day to work and they know their path and you walk them back through and they may tell you something like when I got here, I heard rustling behind me. You're standing there and you see a big dumpster in the middle of the alleyway and they describe the sounds and maybe there was a guy standing behind the dumpster and again back to the shopkeeper or other people on the street. Did UPS just deliver to the store and walk right by the guy who was running away and the driver is gone now.

Criminal justice system is confusing to everyone unless you are deeply involved. “One thing that clearly happens with our disabled community is the prosecutorial process is slow. By the time they get to court many times those caregivers are gone because they are making $3.75 an hour and don't hang around for the 18 months it takes to get to trial and they are gone and the witnesses are gone and it is a terrible problem that we have, specifically with prosecutorial end. Rosemary mentioned early on about someone having their case is dismissed by plea-bargaining. Again, this is police officers and district attorney need to inform witness programs and nonprofits they may be working with to understand the system and make sure there is communication using emails or however it works just to make sure that people are kept abreast of what is going on.

Another quote is barriers to interviewing. "But the key on these investigations is time and I know patrol officers feel like, I've got to get this call done and move on. And at some point the administration is going to have to realize that if you get one of these calls, your’re going to be tied up for a long time." There is a constant theme of time. Time from the people with disabilities that didn't feel the officer spent enough time and the officers trying to have time for other things that need to happen. This is a policy issue and agencies need to realize that if you have a call from a person with a disability that it is going to take more time and you have to have that realization.

We have some solutions that were suggested by officers. Specialty unit with disability trained investigators. Good idea, particularly the investigators who do any follow-up will spend a lot more time with follow-ups and taking statements and taking a statement from someone who was deaf, the grammar may not seem appropriate. Non-standard grammar does not indicate anything about their intellect. Investigators have a higher level of training, but the general disability training at the Academy for everyone to understand it so that everyone from the officer handling the initial case from the person with disability to investigators understanding they have to do something a little bit different. The last one which everyone in the United States probably dreams about is hiring people with common sense and I don't know how to fix that one. Again, we need adequate time and it's difficult to overcome.

Community outreach is huge. Increasing familiarity with community resourcesfor example the hard of hearing, a lot of them. Another trick is talking to them because they are providing services to your clients. They need to understand when crimes have been committed, like they got their laptop stolen and they did not report it and several months later they were victims of identity theft. The person went to the nonprofit they were working with and had them cancel or call the bank for them to take care of everything.

And fortunately the person called and said should we do something about this and the answer was yes, do a police report. Had they done or police report at the front end, there probably wouldn't have been an identity theft case. But getting service providers to recognize and call the sheriff or the police department to prevent and make a report. Informal interaction with disability community. Police are out there going to meetings and stopping in on disability groups and going to the regional center in San Francisco for example I used to stop there all the time. Also just increasing familiarity with community resources so officers know who to call and get a question answered.

Also, another quote. "So it makes it difficult because we want to help. We are the underdog. We want to take care of people, and we only have a limited amount of time." Time with a key barrier to investigation. Wasted time and time to conduct thorough investigation. That is just an ongoing problem but it can be done.

Let me skip ahead to the polling question. Law-enforcement training regarding disability issues should not include which of the following? An overview of the types of disability? Information about the ADA? Discrimination laws? Diagnostic criteria for the evaluation disability? Inclusion of people with disability and development of training?

Moving right along because we are a little short on time. Another quote about training. "It's not realistic to think we can train up officers to reach the high levels of being able to deal with a whole bunch of disabilities. In reality, that would be like trying to train officers to speak 100 different languages or something." Another suggestion was, "lLet's say you've got officers that are specially trained in interviewing disabled people or some sort of skills like that, maybe by policy make it so that they come in and deal with the disabled victim, but the primary officer is still responsible for processing the case or gathering the evidence, interviewing potential witnesses, perhaps identify the officers coming to assist." Same idea to train everybody to one level of recognition and specialized investigators to a higher level, if need be.

So recommendations. Researchers, law enforcement officials, and disability advocates should work together to develop and test efficient, effective, realistic ways of closing the gaps between these two groups. They should offer relevant and useful information on interacting effectively with people with disabilities. Likewise, disability groups should receive appropriate information relating to law enforcement. Common efforts should also be made to provide social and educational opportunities for people with disabilities and law enforcement officials, outside of crime related situations. Just let me end with this.

We talked about sensitivity training, non-disabled people sit in a wheelchairgive it a try, get up and hand the chair on to the next person to try. I like the idea of awareness training. If you are made aware of something you can take responsibility and do something about it. You are focusing on training the the diagnostic statistical manual 5 there are new new definitions on the Austism Disorder Spectrum, if you are training to a medical model, you are locked into a diagnosis and the diagnosis might be wrong, and if you don't find out is wrong until later then law enforcement has a negative impact. If you focus on behavior and notice people with disabilities – what officers come in contact with, realize you are seeing behaviors and ask that question and modify your approach accordingly. The bottom line is plan with not for. I will turn it back to Kathryn.

>> Kathryn Walker: First of all, thank you to Dr. Hughes and Sgt. Sullivan for a great presentation. Here in a minute, I will start calling on people with questions or reading them from the Q&A section, so be ready to raise your hand when you have a question. If your question isn't answered in this webinar or if you have questions, send them to us at in CCJD info@thearc.org and we will answer afterwards.

After the seminar we have a short survey for you to fill out. You may have to copy and paste it into your browser, if you are not able to click on it directly. In May, we will welcome Charlie Paceley who will present using model particles to guide criminal justice response to domestic violence and sexual assault victims with disabilities. Don't forget to register. If registration fails, we are working on a waitlist process and you can watch the archives 2 to 5 days after the live event. Who has questions?

I've got one here from Karen, and I apologize if I get your last name wrong [indiscernible]. She would like to know more about how the police are allowed to close a case without any notification to the victim. Don't forget to mute yourself, presenters.

>> Sgt. (retired) Michael Sullivan: Jurisdiction. Basically what happens is that the police prepare the case for prosecution. May get dismissed for lack of evidence and that is something you can check with the police or sheriff department and see what the criteria is. Particularly that of district attorneys diecision to prosecute.

>> Kathryn Walker: Thank you, we've got one from Christie Ward. How do we reduce public fear of people with disabilities? If we need them as partners, how can we help them understand enough to be a natural support? Maybe Dr. Hughes if you want to weigh in on this one?

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: This is Rosemary. I think we talked about the possibilities of decreasing fear and intimidation of police by people with disabilities, and one that definitely calls on the law enforcement officers to behave in such a way, and media, that the intimidation and the bullying by police would be eliminated, so that there would be less and also got as we mentioned before, having informal contacts with one another, as Michael mentioned in his presentation. Does that help?

>> Kathryn Walker: Yes. One more here. What is the role of culture and reporting crime, and has that been incorporated into the research?

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: The role of culture has been incorporated into the research and especially around deaf culture, and that's really a big one because it's often eliminated and overlooked in this type of research. I think also the fact that we do collect information about culture and minority cultures and report that accordingly, as far as the culture, mostly I think we've incorporated people from different racial and different sexual minority groups and different disability groups into the development and implementation and evaluation of our research.

>> Sgt. (retired) Michael Sullivan: Kathryn, can I go back a second to the previous question? We talk about fears and there are fears on both side that can be brought to the table and their own experience. I had an officer tell me one time about autism, you know they get agitated and they are really strong. And that's one of those things where I think wow, really? If no one has ever told that officer the contrary, then his view of the world is world is, somewhere along the way, that people with autism or intellectual disabilities are really strong, so this idea that there is a two-way street, there's a lot of stereotyping going on both sides.

>> Kathryn Walker: Thank you. I am seeing a couple of other questions that are more about resources and where to find information, so we will be sure to follow up with anyone after with where to find and there is a reference page as well that you will be able to see on the website. I'm sticking right now to the more substantive kind of questions while we have our experts on the line. Christie Ward, regarding deaf victims, Police officers carry a simple card with emergency signs or symbols to know the type of expert stress the person is experiencing. I think that's a great question beyond that community.

>> Sgt. (retired) Michael Sullivan: One of the continuing things we keep saying is having sign language interpreters available 24 seven. Simple signs. There are a lot of cards and things out there for officers with icons and different kinds of communications and those are all available and good ideas, and we talk about the Americans with disabilities act, this is a perfect opportunity to play with a community perfect opportunity to find out what is going to work best for them. And training and policy and procedure, you have to lock those together.

>> Kathryn Walker: Thank you, does anybody else have questions? You can also raise your hand and ask out loud if you don't want to type it in. Do our presenters have anything else for us before we finish up.?

>> Sgt. (retired) Michael Sullivan: I would like to say, if you haven't thought about contacting a community liaison, I perform that function. One thing you can do if you don't know where to start, is talk to the chief of police or the sheriff or find out if you are in a county or city-- who is your county or city ADA coordinator because that someone you can make contact with them.

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: Law-enforcement contacting people with disability expertise, in most communities there will be a center for living that is a resource center and a source for all types on interacting and getting to know people with disabilities and accessing resources with those centers. I also want to say thank you to everybody for your wonderful participation and giving us the opportunity to visit with you today.

>> Kathryn Walker: Thank you! That is the end of our program for today. Real fast, Carolyn just pointed out that I should let you guys know, there is a Senate hearing next week. Law-enforcement responses to disabled Americans, promising approaches for protecting public safety, and that is on April 29th, at 10 AM, at the Dirksen city Center office building in DC, but if you cannot attend, you can also submit written testimony by the end of the day on Monday. If you want any more information about that repeal, feel free to email us and we will get you moving because they need to hear what everyone has to say. Thank you everyone for attending and we will be sure to follow up with those of you that have asked for more information. Thanks for coming!

>> Sgt. (retired) Michael Sullivan: Thank you!

>> Dr. Rosemary Hughes: Thank you!