11:00:24 >> Good afternoon, everyone! We can have all of our panelists start their videos.
11:00:55 Wonderful, okay. We can all see one another. All right, we're going to get started.
11:01:03 Welcome everyone! Welcome to apart plus connected.
11:01:16 This discussion will talk about how the COVID-19 virus has impacted New York City residents and deaf people in New York City. I am Breanna. I am a Gallaudet student and a research intern.
11:01:25 In the doctors, John and Betty J deaf documentary center.
11:01:39 So I am also, my family, I come from a family of deaf New Yorkers and we're going to be, like I said, talking about COVID-19 and how it has affected New Yorkers.
11:01:54 So we're grateful to our five New Yorkers and we also want to thank our major funding support from the national humanities and purple.
11:01:59 We also had support from the Garry S and Margaret D. Anderson family foundation.
11:02:09 The Hebrew association of the Deaf, the union league of the Deaf, the cantor foundation and many more. So thank you all for your support.
11:02:20 So that said, the comments shared here are of those of the panelist and are not endorsed by our sponsors.
11:02:26 So let's meet our panelist. Our first panelist is from the Bronx.
11:02:40 >> Hi, everyone! I this is my sign name. I am from the doe min can Republic.
11:02:45 >> Thank you, so nice to meet you. You from from the Bronx?
11:02:50 >> My name is Carlos. And this is my sign name.
11:02:55 I'm currently hear in Queens. That's where I live.
11:03:05 >> Super! Super. We're going to move ton to our Brooklyn resident.
11:03:11 >> Hi, everyone! My name is Marina.
11:03:14 And I'm from Brooklyn. Hello
11:03:20 >> Hi, great, excellent!
11:03:26 And now our Staten Island resident.
11:03:35 >> Hi, everyone! I was born there, my name is Alexandra and I go by Alex for short.
11:03:39 >> Awesome! Last but not least, our panel list from Manhattan.
11:03:52 >> Good afternoon, everyone! I'm pa TREES and I'm from Manhattan.
11:03:56 Great to meet all of you. Now, we're going to begin our questions.
11:04:07 So I'm going to ask you a number of questions and our panelist can answer or not. This is just a free flowing conversation and a time to learn from one another.
11:04:17 So if we have time left at the end, we'll try to take a few questions from the chat on the bottom of your screen.
11:04:25 All right. So our first question is related to changes.
11:04:33 So what has changed for you and your local Deaf community since the pandemic has started?
11:04:36 So what has changed? Who would like to begin?
11:04:58 >> Sure, I'll start! I'm thinking about the changes that have happened. Long ago, as a member of the Deaf community.
11:05:07 There was clubs that we engage in and with technology, things are different. We're texting each other on video chat and socialize differently.
11:05:15 Yet again, I have noticed that our social distancing almost reminds me of what happened in the older days.

11:05:25 We were social distancing until we got together in the clubs and the different tournaments and events and now particularly in my community,
11:05:30 when it comes to deaf organizations, we would always meet and plan workshops.
11:05:38 We would often event plan conferences and fund raising activities and so forth.
11:05:42 I don't really see that happening now. We still remain in touch.
11:05:47 However, we don't physically interact with one another as we once did.
11:05:52 So that's one change I have noticed. Another change in particular is Zoom.
11:06:00 You know, this has become our new norm for how we connect.
11:06:03 >> Absolutely. It's become the new norm, so Carlos, first.
11:06:08 >> Carlos: Well, I work in the school for the Deaf here in New York City.
11:06:15 We serve students from zero to 21 years of age. And when it comes to our student population,
11:06:20 in total, they speak 21 different languages.
11:06:27 So now with everyone remote and me staying at home, the question is, how can we provide equitable access for all students?
11:06:36 Not only just for Deaf students but those who are deaf blind, along with deaf and additional disabilities.
11:06:49 We don't really have measures in place to provide access and this is creating a huge impact not only in the Deaf community nationally when it comes to education but more so here in New York City. We're really taking a look at what it is we have at our dispose sal.
11:06:58 How we can contact our students as well as the families and ensure there's communication happening as far as what resources are being used.
11:07:04 As educators we have to truly screen that certain programs are effective and translatable and accessible.
11:07:13 That has a profound impact. That's one example of a huge impact that the Coronavirus is having on me as an educator.
11:07:21 >> Absolutely! ROKS san that?
11:07:30 >> Yes, so we in the Bronx have face to face to face actives when we come together.
11:07:36 Whether it's the bar or wherever it may be so now, the COVID-19 hit, we aren't doing that anymore.
11:07:57 We're socializing through Zoom and so it's very very different for all of us.
11:08:02 >> I would like to point out as someone who has a Deaf club here in stat in
11:08:03 island. It's
11:08:07 ironic that people want to us to open the club again and we're getting that FK a.
11:08:12 People are feeling isolated and lonely and longing for that socialization.
11:08:18 And we're happy to do so as long as they want us to do so with masks and be able to play games and such.
11:08:25 We're prioritizing health right now and because we have a center for senior citizens and they are high risk.
11:08:31 We had a four time a month event so we decided that we would establish a VP conference center.
11:08:39 And most of them don't have Facebook or other social media sources to be able to get information from.

11:08:50 So we are sending things out via e-mail, via messages, trying to make sure that we're staying involved in these people's lives and getting together four times a month virtually.
11:09:01 We can't do so in person yet because of safety and we know people are desiring that ability to get together in a physical capacity.
11:09:05 We're trying to make sure we're being safe above all.
11:09:10 >> Absolutely! And marina
11:09:22 >> Marina: As Alexander just mentioned, I help run an adult program for senior citizens who have additional health issues.
11:09:30 We get together a couple of times a week. Now, everyone is quarantined at home. We're having the same problem.
11:09:39 Some people don't have access to technology. Some make calls related to their health. People need to check on and see how they're doing.
11:09:44 Whether they need shopping done for them or whatever it is they need.
11:09:49 Our clients receive home healthcare services and that has been greatly impacted.
11:09:58 They're used to people coming to their homes and now people have gloves and masks and are practicing that social distancing.
11:10:06 And there are clients out there who, I'm sorry, you're freezing. Can you go back a sentence.
11:10:07 You said what?
11:10:19 >> Right, some people don't want the health aids coming in to their homes. They are afraid they'll catch the virus from home health aid so they're declining these healthcare services.
11:10:24 There are some that are unable to shop for themselves. Unable to make their own food.
11:10:30 So we're providing food delivery services for them and our office staff is now working from home.
11:10:33 And having to take a lot of this on.
11:10:39 Even working harder than they would regularly in the office.
11:10:48 And so it's really important right now that we're coordinating medical care services, making sure they get their medicines.
11:10:56 If they have doctor's appointments, to follow up. They have to make sure when they go, everyone is wearing masks and gloves.
11:11:06 It's been really impactful and as Alex mentioned, everybody missing getting together and they want us to reopen and I know it's a hardship for everyone.
11:11:10 >> Yeah, I can see, it has impacted education, the medical system, so much.
11:11:15 And we're creating new ways of really meeting the needs of everyone.
11:11:19 So I'm going to move on to the next question now.
11:11:33 The next question is related to our sides. So when COVID-19 hit, has there American sign language signs that have come up?
11:11:36 Any pandemic specific signs?
11:11:44 >> Roxanna that: Yes, finger spelling and this sign came up. I have seen a lot of that.
11:11:50 Carlos: In the beginning, for the word quarantine, this is how we signed it.
11:11:58 And then a couple weeks ago, there was an organization HEARD, heard.

11:12:08 Who shared some information that the signs, we were using for quarantine initially were actually quite triggering to those that were a part of that organization.
11:12:14 So as a result, we tried to come up with more appropriate signing and we came up with this, for example.
11:12:17 So those are some new examples of signs.
11:12:21 Here's another one.
11:12:27 >> Great, thank you! Anyone else? Any other pandemic specific signs?
11:12:44 >> Well, simply stay at home. That's how I have seen it communicated. This is another way that I have seen quarantine be signed.
11:12:53 >> And what about face mask, what are you signing for face mask?
11:13:04 Yeah, this is a new sign so we're seeing lots of different signs.
11:13:08 And you know, it may not be something we see in the future.
11:13:12 So we're going to go on to the next question.
11:13:17 Roxanna, did you want to add something?
11:13:21 >> Roxanna: Yes, I have seen it spelled COVID-19 as well.
11:13:25 >> Yeah, so now we're going to be talking about changes in our community.
11:13:32 So how are you staying connected to the deaf community in this time of seclusion?
11:13:47 Deaf community in this time of seclusion?
11:13:47 What kind of technology are you using and how are you staying connected?
11:13:55 >> Pa TREES: Zoom for sure. For our community, this is the best way to do visually using sign language.
11:14:00 We would have brunch and get togethers around noontime and you would bring your favorite dish.
11:14:07 When we had brunch together but having, you know, zoom to access one another, has been the best next solution.
11:14:13 So technology has really improved leaps and bounds.
11:14:23 You know, texting is another option but seeing somebody, seeing their face, through face time or you know, the different kind of platforms that are available through video chat.
11:14:28 You know, those are really instrumental in trying to help one another stay connected in the Deaf community.
11:14:30 >> Alex and then Carlos.
11:14:38 >> Alex: Sure. I just would love to add to that. I'm noticing with the older population and our Deaf community, they really like routine.
11:14:48 For example, they like meeting four times a month. There wasn't anything in the month of March. There was a sense of disconnect.
11:14:54 People were feeling lost and unsure on how to communicate with each other so we were able to host events virtually in April.
11:15:06 People started to feel much better about being able to get together and so I think that routine and sticking with it has helped maintaining some of that sense of normalcy
11:15:09 for our senior citizens to that's one way.
11:15:12 >> Absolutely. Carlos?
11:15:20 >> Carlos: When it comes to our students, our teachers have actually set up Marco polo which is an app.
11:15:27 This is how we sign it. And that means students, families, instructors.

11:15:31 We can all see one another. Although it's not live.
11:15:36 They have an option where they can view a video that is sent to you.
11:15:41 So it's a nice tool to learn sign language.
11:15:45 You know, my mother's primary language is American sign language.
11:16:02 And any time there's a mass or some church service, they're able to access, you know, through the interpreting services as other attendees last week.
11:16:13 It was ALMA de-- a Deaf women's group and they had a dance class, a salsa event.
11:16:19 My mom was able to join and you know, with Zoom, you can play games even. You know, family feud.
11:16:29 You know, these are some games that some of my members in my family and members in the community have been able to stay connected through these times.
11:16:42 >> Absolutely! Marina?
11:16:53 >> Marina: We have a client who does have to stay at a recovery center. Not because COVID-19 but they had it in the rehab center.
11:17:00 That's been difficult because the nurses and the staff at the rehab center do not sign.
11:17:05 They are wearing PPE at all times and for a Deaf person, there is no communication there.
11:17:09 Their sister has been reaching out to us and asking us what we can do.
11:17:14 They're depressed. They are unable to communicate. They don't know what people are saying because of the masks.
11:17:23 So what we have been thinking of is having one of our staff members help install SORenson.
11:17:26 Which is a video phone app on a tablet. Getting that ready to go.
11:17:31 Coordinating it with the rehab center to be able to meet there because you can't go into the center.
11:17:37 So you have to meet a member of their staff, teach them how to use the app and the tablet.
11:17:44 So they would know how to help this Deaf person in the rehab center.
11:17:56 So after that, there was a huge difference. The family learned how to work and reach out to their family member in the rehab center.
11:18:05 It's been five weeks since COVID-19 hit. And people are just getting more and more creative on what they can do to address these communication challenges.
11:18:10 That's another way to stay connected to the community it's a lot of trial and error.
11:18:13 More so than ever now especially in that center.
11:18:18 We're not able to go and visit people. So it's a lot of phone based work.
11:18:25 And it has increased the number of phone calls and reach out, reaching out that way too to.
11:18:27 It's a good problem to have.
11:18:47 trice?
11:18:52 >> Reaching out to our family through interpreters and seeing our relative's faces through the new feature.
11:19:01 It's really nice to be able to see those that we're talking to and to connect with them visually even though we're communicating through an interpreter.

11:19:06 At one point we were not able to do that but now with our families being able to access one another through this new app.
11:19:14 You know, this wave, that they provide, it's a really nice tool.
11:19:16 It's nice to see our family members.
11:19:22 When we see them, it's a higher sense of kind of happiness and feeling able that you're able to connect with them.
11:19:25 And in is such a perfect time for this to come up.
11:19:28 >> Absolutely!
11:19:34 >> Patrice: So texting is fine but really wondering how we can see our faces, you know?
11:19:40 WAVELLO, has been an incredible tool for us to use.
11:19:43 >> Yes, and marina, you wanted to add to that?
11:19:51 >> Sorry, your screen is freezing, Marina.
11:19:53 Can you start again?
11:20:00 >> Our clients cannot come to our office.
11:20:12 So we have to teach the doctor how to use WAVELLO and then how to reach out to the client.
11:20:20 Because our clients sometimes are not tech savvy. So we're finding we're having to train both entities.
11:20:35 So when people are not feeling good, rather than having the resistance go to the doctor, they can use the WAVELLO option with the technologies we have today.
11:20:36 It's made it easier.
11:20:40 >> I agree!
11:20:43 And Roxanna, did you want to add?
11:20:53 >> Roxanna: Yes! It's really a fortunate time because some of us are from hearing families. We don't have Deaf family members.
11:20:56 And so it's nice to be able to still stay in touch with people.
11:21:07 So my daughter, actually was able to use Zoom with a group of family members.
11:21:12 We were able to use face time and actually chat with one another.
11:21:22 So that's been really nice and really important so that I'm not alone and the only Deaf person in this hearing family where I have no communication with my community.
11:21:24 So technology is wonderful.
11:21:28 Breanna: Technology really is a wonderful tool.
11:21:31 >> Does anyone else want to add anything?
11:21:33 Okay, great!
11:21:42 So Marina was talking about face masks and how that's really impacting the Deaf community and how this next question is about face masks.
11:21:47 And how they have impacted you and impacted the Deaf community.
11:21:53 And you know, how about trying not to touch your face while you're signing?
11:22:00 Has getting attention change and all of that?
11:22:06 >> Roxanna: It is a huge impact it's odd to see face masks.
11:22:14 For example, uber. When I show people I can't actually hear, I try to show them my phone and you know, they're just not used to that.
11:22:22 So it's -- and I'm not used to it. It's a very odd feeling.

11:22:23 I feel very closed in.
11:22:35 When I have gone shopping, it's also very odd. People are keeping their distance and people may be talking to one another.
11:22:37 I don't have any idea.
11:22:48 And so when I'm asking questions, I may show people my phone and it's hard to understand their response. So it's a really challenge.
11:22:50 It's very strange times!
11:22:59 >> Alex: Yeah, I would just love to add, during quarantine, however you choose to sign it.
11:23:07 Staying at home, we still have to go to grocery shop and get essential
11:23:08 items.
11:23:13 People are wearing face masks and such when they're in the store.
11:23:18 Often, I don't realize people are speaking to me and I have to identify that I'm Deaf.
11:23:30 It's really hard. We're in an interesting time period right now where communication access for people who depend on lipreading oral methods of communication is a little bit lost.
11:23:37 It's a bit of a challenge, especially because we will be likely wearing masks going forward in the coming years, even.
11:23:45 And we can't go anywhere right now, the mall, a play, nothing without potentially wearing these masks.
11:23:47 So it's really difficult for sure.
11:23:49 >> Agreed! Patrice?
11:23:56 >> Patrice: Yeah, I echo what all of you have shared. When it comes to my situation.
11:24:08 I think I am a pretty good lipreader but you know, when I'm not able to actually see one's lips, that's a very different story.
11:24:16 It's hard to discern if their angry or sad. It's very hard to tell. I don't know if I'm bothering other people. It's very hard to read what the reaction is.
11:24:22 You know, especially in the morning when we're passing by folks.
11:24:25 It's just very unnerving and awkward experience.
11:24:33 But when it comes to signing, I feel like that's kind of who I am and I am used to doing that face to face.
11:24:39 And also, speaking face to face, being able to touch your face while signing, it's different.
11:24:46 There's certain signs that physically, you end up touching your face with the upper part of your body.
11:24:55 So I have noticed there's some face masks that have been created for Deaf people.
11:25:02 You know, I think it could be a good idea but, you know, I'm not necessarily interested in creating my own face mask.
11:25:04 That's where I stand.
11:25:07 >> Agreed! Marina?
11:25:14 >> Marina: I find myself gesturing a lot more now to hearing people.
11:25:19 For example, these things, pointing.
11:25:26 Just to start to prepare people to understand I'm Deaf.
11:25:30 Using my finger to have someone pause for a minute.
11:25:42 I think now, peoples specially in stores are setting up social distancing markers.

11:25:55 So people can stand further apart. More and more stores have that plexy gas covering between you and the individual, cashier or whatever it is.
11:26:03 Even at the pharmacy, people who know me, will take their masks down and speak to me and then pop it back on.
11:26:11 There's pros and cons to that. Some won't write back and forth with me because they don't want to use the pen.
11:26:18 They're afraid so I have to bring -- make sure I bring my own pen and paper and they need to have their own pen and paper.
11:26:21 So we need to unite a little bit.
11:26:24 >> Agreed!
11:26:26 Patrice?
11:26:34 >> Patrice: Well, that's funny. You know, with your
11:26:42 iPhone, when you're wearing a mask, your face ID doesn't work. I can't even get in there.
11:26:52 I have to type my pass code and sometimes I'm tempted to quickly pull off my mask and access my phone.
11:26:58 >> Right, just like with gloves. Using your phone with gloves on is really difficult sometimes.
11:27:01 It doesn't sometimes recognize your touch with the gloves on.
11:27:03 That's also been a struggle.
11:27:09 >> Roxanna: Yeah!
11:27:13 I actually like to use the
11:27:17 iPhone pen and that makes it a whole lot easier.
11:27:21 >> All right, anything else that anyone wants to add?
11:27:32 Okay, great! So again, you know, we're touching on accessibility issues when it comes to the face masks so I want to talk a little bit more in depth about accessibility.
11:27:36 So does anyone want to talk about any barriers that you're facing?
11:27:41 Any accessibility issues here in this time of Coronavirus? Carlos?
11:27:51 >> Carlos: Well, with the Coronavirus and people staying at home, I think it can certainly have an impact on one's mental health.
11:27:58 Staying isolated, being disconnected with others and constantly being in a state of anxiety or worry.
11:28:04 For those who have severe mental illness, that may be thinking about harming themselves.
11:28:12 You know offering treatment and it could be going to the hospital for evaluations and having the psychiatrist at the hospital.
11:28:20 If you're working with a group of Deaf people, there may be a challenge. It used to be that, you know, people didn't want to go to the hospital.
11:28:31 And now, it seems like, a lot of the psychiatrist and ERs are opening up and we're evaluating students in the particular.
11:28:38 There's a number of them that should be preferred to see professional services and sometimes their family members don't want them to go to the hospital.
11:28:47 I think, hearing people can have psych evaluations through the phone, with mobile apps but, one has to ask, how does that work with Deaf people?

11:28:51 You know, young adults, children, and adults.
11:29:01 And I think, you know, having to address these challenges with folks with disability is a question that needs to be asked.
11:29:12 There's people from my organization that reached out to the hospital and we tried to address some of these concerns and this is a serious issue of accessibility.
11:29:18 Particularly for Deaf people in the New York City area. You know, if they need therapy, what is going to happen?
11:29:31 Also, when it comes to Deaf therapists, you know, who communicate fluently in American sign language, there's not many available.
11:29:39 There's only a few organizations that provide help and are licensed but out of the many fifty states, that's not the case.
11:29:48 >> Marina: I would say we're struggling with the same situation here. Our services are long term care.
11:30:05 Some Deaf people want to be able to apply for that long term care through their respective states but we have to make sure, insurance companies require a health assessment interview. Nurses used to be able to go to the client's home.
11:30:09 It took about three hours to get that intake interview done.
11:30:11 It's now a phone based interview.
11:30:18 And it has to be a three way conference call now.
11:30:31 We have a communication facilitator of such which not everybody is accepting of our way of going about this.
11:30:38 We have a person who can work with relay on the phone with the nurse.
11:30:45 The nurse can't see the client but that's not what they have in order to be connected to the Deaf person.
11:30:50 There is a person connected -- but not a hearing person to a Deaf person like that.
11:30:56 So we have had to create a our own way and our own strategy for doing this.
11:31:11 We need to, to make a judgment call -- we made that judgment call and we need people to trust that way of going about things.
11:31:18 There could be a better system but we have put this in place because the people were not receiving the services that they need.
11:31:29 And this is our temporary solution for now.
11:31:34 >> Okay, Patrice and then Roxanna
11:31:43 >> Patrice: So as a Deaf interpreter, when it comes to service provision, you know, I have to kind of think about how to do that.
11:31:51 I'm not comfortable with the masks and I feel like, you know, the hospitals aren't necessarily going to give me the best protection.
11:31:55 I might not be able to fully access the patient's needs.
11:32:03 So if I get the call, and I'm asked, if I could come in, I'm not necessarily comfortable doing that.
11:32:09 It's interesting, you know, having to provide a service but yet, you're met with barriers to even do that.
11:32:16 >> All right! Roxanna?
11:32:22 >> Roxanna: Yes, absolutely! I had the experience where I don't have an interpreter and I don't have any accessibility.

11:32:29 So around March, I used the train and I got to work where I teach ASL with various clients.
11:32:41 And after that, I mean, clearly things were happening that day and when I went to the train in the afternoon, it was a different scene.
11:32:56 And I was so confused because I imagined people were, you know, using English and understanding one another and maybe they were even announce wants and I was so uncomfortable. I didn't know what was going on. It was extremely crowded.
11:33:03 And finally, when I got off the train and went home, I mean, I was just so disshoveled.
11:33:09 I contacted a friend who was an interpreter and I imagined would hear what was happening.
11:33:12 I turned on the TV and there was no captions.
11:33:18 So then, you know, I finally learned that the Coronavirus was basically here.
11:33:22 And here I am, you know, I was in this crowded train.
11:33:29 And it was just so upsetting. You know, I didn't VI any accessibility.
11:33:36 That whole afternoon, not even on the train or the TV and then finally, I got the news.
11:33:42 On the train, it was so crowded. Everybody acting very odd. I could have easily been exposed. Luckily, I wasn't.
11:33:47 So luckily, I'm safe! Yeah, it's very scary.
11:33:49 >> Alex: Yeah, I would like to mention two things.
11:34:13 Both the mayor and the governor of New York City, you can watch them kind of battle it out. The mayor for having them on the platforms any time they're having filmed conferences or filmed sessions.
11:34:25 The governor thinks that the captions are enough. That there's no need for an interpreter and it's interesting to compare New York state versus New York City.
11:34:29 They need to be offering this information.
11:34:34 They're saying that the state needs to provide this on the behalf of Deaf people.
11:34:36 For the entire state!
11:34:43 So that's one thing that I really appreciated about New York more than ever. As we really do rally together.
11:34:48 And our governor is very supportive of that. We're making that happen during this time.
11:34:58 Whereas HOIS TORically. Now they have more power and voice.
11:35:02 People realize, they need to provide access for us.
11:35:09 New York City also has a city wide call for information.
11:35:18 It comes via text. And you can get that in the languages that you want.
11:35:26 The past President and some CDIs and Deaf people in New York.
11:35:39 Have an ASL any time call in number that you can use and if you're getting these in English, these alerts and whatever, you don't understand them.
11:35:43 Then you have the opportunity to see them in sign language. Not just in captions.
11:35:52 And the hope is that we'll have all of those, all of those announcements that don't already have an interpreter in sign.
11:35:56 >> That's fantastic! All of these creative ways. So Patrice?
11:35:59 , did you want to say anything?
11:36:03 >> Patrice: No, I don't have anything to add.

11:36:11 >> All right, so there's a lot of barriers to accessibility and as Deaf people, we will always have to go through these and always have to fight for our rights.
11:36:16 So, Patrice had mentioned that we're coming up with different ways to keep ourselves safe.
11:36:23 You know, PPE, masks, so what other things are you doing to keep yourself safe?
11:36:25 other than staying at home?
11:36:27 So what else are you doing?
11:36:35 Staying six feet away.
11:36:42 >> Roxanna: Yes, this is the first time I have ever experienced having to wash my hands so much and having to stay six feet apart.
11:36:47 And having to sign so large to see one another. I'm just not used to this.
11:36:56 So making sure that we're all six feet apart, wearing masks, wearing gloves, trying to sign while we're wearing GLOEFs.
11:37:00 ing gloves. It's just the new situation, not used to all of that.
11:37:08 >> Marina: Yeah, I think it's really been a challenge, most especially to those in the healthcare field.
11:37:25 Our healthcare workers and caregivers, we have about 10 or so who are spread out.
11:37:33 And you know, our Deaf clients help our seniors with day to day, living needs.
11:37:35 Cooking, cleaning, et cetera.
11:37:47 So how do we protect those care givers, making sure they're taken care of.
11:37:56 All of the caregivers are using public transportation. So with masks and gloves and everything else, we have had to teach them upon arriving.
11:38:06 You have to take your gloves off, put new gloves on, take your mask, off, put a new mask on because you have been outside and you don't want to risk infection to the client.
11:38:11 They get slippers once they get to the client's house to put over their shoes.
11:38:25 The client will sometimes also use a face mask, once the caregiver arises once they feel uncomfortable and resistant to it.
11:38:36 Something else we have done is teach both the caregivers as well as the clients proper hygienic techniques for washing their hands.
11:38:41 The staff has been a little bit easier working from home because we're direct service providers.
11:38:43 That's been one of the biggest challenges.
11:38:54 And the biggest challenge of all is our Deaf/blind consumers.
11:39:01 How do we tactilely communicate with them right now?
11:39:05 We have to provide services and protect the individuals who are providing the service.
11:39:13 Plus we have really tried to encourage our clients not to go out and go shopping.
11:39:23 Have a meal delivery service established. Whatever it is, to try to be creative to lessen their likelihood that they need to be out into the public.
11:39:31 Maybe, we can reduce it to one time a week or have food and medicine delivered rather than them going out.
11:39:36 We're trying to get creative in what we can get delivered. Can you stay home and have your blood drawn?
11:39:44 Just to try to mitigate or minimize the amount of exposure these clients have.
11:39:55 Some clients have had their hours cut for work we say, if you can, please do so.

11:39:58 Some of in a needs based situation.
11:39:59 >> Absolutely!
11:40:08 >> Carlos: As I'm looking in every room in my house, you know, I realize we have hand sanitizer stacked everywhere.
11:40:14 That's a big change. And in addition to that, my husband goes grocery shopping, you know, every week.
11:40:27 I help get the food and when he gets home, we will desanitized all of the groceries and food that we can leave outside. We will, for three days.
11:40:32 You know, when it comes to packages and mail, you know, we're very sensitive to that stuff.
11:40:36 And you know, these are some changes that we have incorporated on a daily basis.
11:40:46 I admit that you know, washing my hands was something I did but now I do it far more regularly and this is really our life now.
11:40:48 >> Absolutely! Alex?
11:40:58 >> Alex: Just to add to what Carlos was saying. My parents are Deaf and senior citizens themselves and the news talks about those with preexisting conditions.
11:41:10 Are a more vulnerable population. Whereas, younger people may be a little bit more resistant to the virus as oppose to seniors.
11:41:22 So you're absolutely right. Staying at home, making sure that you change your clothes if you have been outside, making sure you're washing your hands, ordering things to your home as much as possible.
11:41:28 Making sure that all of the bags and plastic things get left outside and that you're sanitizing your groceries.
11:41:34 What has been really driven home to me has become more of a routine now.
11:41:37 It's becoming a new norm for us because we can't really think of ourselves.
11:41:42 We need to be thinking about those family members who are in the vulnerable population.
11:41:45 It's a very challenging time for everyone, for sure.
11:42:03 >> Roxanna: Yeah, so I have a fourteen year old son who used to shop.
11:42:08 I leave him home and make sure I'm the only one who goes shopping and then I bring it home.
11:42:17 So it has become routine and you know, I just feel like it's not safe for my son to be out there getting exposed.
11:42:22 So March until now, he's been at home and boy, it has not been easy.
11:42:41 >> Patrice: Yeah, in my experience, my children are grown now but as adults, I haven't seen them in eight weeks. My son came to give me something.
11:42:49 I was very excited but he didn't actually come in my home. I had to meet him outside and it just really felt disheartening.
11:42:51 Because they say home is where the heart is.
11:42:57 And you know, my son actually works for MTA as a bus driver.
11:43:04 So you know, he didn't want to potentially risk bringing the Coronavirus into my home.
11:43:12 And you know, not being able to see my children, wow! The impact there, it was certainly felt. You know, I was excited to come down and see him.

11:43:23 I said, you know what? Forget all of this. Let me give you a hug. I'm happy to see you. We check in much more often and we're washing our hands all of the time.
11:43:28 It's just not as relaxing at times as it used to be.
11:43:37 We have to be extra vigilant about keeping our hands clean, wearing masks and constantly having to think about how we're changing our habits.
11:43:42 So you know, what I'm sharing is very similar to what everyone here has shared.
11:43:49 >> Wow! So touching and Marina?
11:43:53 >> Marina: My parents live two blocks from my home.
11:43:58 I'm used to seeing my parents often. They visit me. I visit them.
11:44:13 And now we're in the same situation where we're meeting outside and exchanging goods. I saw my mother. I felt bad. I didn't get her flowers for mother's day?
11:44:21 Should do it? What should I do? I would rather not be in a dangerous situation so I ended up sending her pictures.
11:44:24 My daughter is the same way.
11:44:31 She is just married and attempting to start a new life and a new home and she can't get out and travel and see the world.
11:44:40 And we are staying in touch but at the same time, it's a challenge to not have that physical connection even with your own family members.
11:44:47 It's been, it's been a challenge and it really, it gets you in your soft spot right there in the heart.
11:44:50 >> Yeah, it's so hard not to hug our loved ones.
11:45:09 Some of you also were talking about home and this space at home. So I would like to talk about how some live in houses and some in apartments. How is your reaction to your neighbors?
11:45:13 Maybe you see them in elevators. Roxanna, do you want to start?
11:45:19 >> Roxanna: Yeah, I don't actually hear anything. I don't hear my neighbors or any communication that's happening.
11:45:30 I often see posts thanks others in the building. I'm on the fourth floor.
11:45:35 There's a doctor and a nurse there. There's in nice thank you posting.
11:45:42 So that's nice I was able to see that but otherwise, I'm not seeing anyone around and I'm not hearing anyone.
11:45:52 >> Patrice: So the neighbor next door is actually a nurse and we communicate through text quite often.
11:45:54 We check in on one another.
11:46:05 I was one day, walking the dog. The woman I was referring to is the neighbor. A very good person.
11:46:11 When we went to vote at the poles, we embrace each other.
11:46:16 At a grocery store, we're happy to see one another.
11:46:24 I recently saw her and went to give her a hug. She was very resistant.
11:46:26 It looked like she was in self-protection mode.
11:46:35 I thought about it and I realized, I get it. And with her wearing a mask, it was difficult to make out who she was.
11:46:49 Trying to communicate from a distance was a challenge. But we really didn't -- we didn't communicate. It was very difficult for me. Just a simple hello gesture and that's it.

11:46:56 To have that communication change going from being able to kind of embrace and be happy with one another, to what we're doing now.
11:46:58 It feels slightly cold, you know?
11:47:07 And not being able to hang out with other people, you know, New York City is famous for always having things to do and people in groves.
11:47:16 But with people social distancing and wearing masks, it's different. I have kind of made it a project to people watch and see who doesn't wear the mask.
11:47:19 It's really hard to find anyone without one.
11:47:30 It used to be, when people got dressed for work and would go out dressed in nice clothes, that's what I would see.
11:47:35 Now, it's totally different. No one is going out to work. No one is leaving their house.
11:47:37 It just really feels depressing, you know?
11:47:40 It feels like it's a depressing time right now.
11:47:48 And you know, with all of these businesses and stores also being closed and considered non essential, you know.
11:47:49 It's like a ghost town.
11:47:58 >> Yeah, so that feels of being disconnected. Anything else anyone wants to add?
11:48:04 >> Marina: I live in an apartment building and we have three elevator banks.
11:48:10 People have been more respectful of having one or two people go in at a time and other people waiting.
11:48:14 Whereas, typically, people would hold the door for you and we would all pack in together.
11:48:25 Now, they're asking people to wait, just one or two in the elevator so I'm just wondering how it will affect people's attitudes. What is their level of patience?
11:48:31 Are people going to be holding doors for one another? Are they going to be providing more space awareness?
11:48:33 It's interesting.
11:48:42 >> Very true! Anything inelse wanted to add?
11:48:52 >> So marina mentioned about spatial awareness. I agree. That leads to the next question as a Deaf person, Deaf culture provides some Deaf gain.
11:49:03 So what is your experience been and have you noticed anything beneficial related to technology or the physical distance that you have been able to chat through windows as an example.
11:49:07 >> Roxanna: Oh, absolutely!
11:49:12 We have all of the technology available. We can video with one another.
11:49:29 I know the hearing community is now, this learning curve for them. They're using face time and video technology, I assume. We're used to it so it's very easy. Marina?
11:49:38 >> Marina: I think the last time I spoke to my daughter, she was going to stop by my house. She pulled up, stayed in her car. We had a full blown conversation with the window up.
11:49:41 It was a different kind of communication now but it was through the window.
11:49:58 And a friend of mine, is talking about as a Deaf person, going and visiting people's homes.
11:50:02 People are taking pictures through windows. People are getting creative.

11:50:08 I have seen a lot of them where people stop by, communicate via window so that's nice to hear.
11:50:11 >> Absolutely! I have noticed that. F
11:50:17 >> Marina: And that's one of the positives that I think has come from this time.
11:50:20 >> Patrice, do you want to add something to that?
11:50:27 >> Patrice: Yeah, when it comes to communicating on paper and having to, you know, write something down and put it up on a window, it's different.
11:50:33 When it comes to my vet, for example, we're not allowed to enter the clinic.
11:50:38 So once I explained to them what I need, I'm told to wait outside.
11:50:42 You know, there's no communication or sign language that happens there.
11:50:47 But at least having the window allows for communication to happen differently between hearing and Deaf people.
11:50:52 >> Absolutely! Anything anyone else wants to add to that?
11:50:59 Okay, great! So I would like to go ahead and go to some of the questions.
11:51:07 So Marina talked about the Deaf blind community.
11:51:10 We have some questions about wanting us to talk more about that.
11:51:21 And have you had any experiences in New York with Deaf blind folks navigating their way through this virus?
11:51:24 >> It has been incredibly frustrating!
11:51:31 Some Deaf blind individuals still have their own way of communicating with us, the staff, via text.
11:51:35 They cannot use the video phone.
11:51:45 I would say we have about fifteen Deaf blind individuals and out of the fifteen, maybe three have the capacity to text.
11:51:57 So what if emergency happens or an aid schedules changes and they need to shift the time they're supposed to go. We have really hit a roadblock with this.
11:52:01 It's been debilitating.
11:52:09 >> Alex: Yes, a few of our members are actually Deaf/blind.
11:52:18 And historically, they have been over stimulated by the amount of texts and whatever else that hasn't been their preferred mode of communication.
11:52:23 Tactile communication has been what they would like to do. Now, everything is home based.
11:52:26 People are on their computers all day long trying to communicate.
11:52:33 So what we tried is two hours of video phone a week with an aid or another person who can support them in the same room.
11:52:38 They can speak English or not. And just as a check in.
11:52:46 How are you doing? How are you feeling? But I wish we had a better way of being able to provide access to these individuals without them feeling so isolated.
11:52:50 And so dependent on their technology all day long.
11:53:01 These people are feeling very physically disconnected from the world and while the communication equipment provide access, it definitely still disconnects you from the community.
11:53:14 >> Marina: Right! Just to dove tail on that. I don't know what is happening with the Deaf/blind community and whether or not there's some that learn braille and some don't.

11:53:24 Our activities, well, some of our clients have the ability to read braille.
11:53:38 And the caregivers are buying braille board games and trying to get different forms of braille or tactile entertainment because they can't go out.
11:53:41 So that's one approach that we have been using.
11:53:45 There are other Deaf people who cannot read braille.
11:53:59 There are Deaf blind people and some Deaf blind have a braille tech store that convert it into braille.
11:54:12 In this type of situation, the Deaf blind community needs to figure out how to come up with a way to better communicate.
11:54:22 The situation may go on in the future.
11:54:27 If they can't read braille or access other forms of communication, what is another way if you can't have physical contact?
11:54:38 Also, in an emergency situation. Notifying someone they're in a emergency. That's a big issue right now in the Deaf blind community.
11:54:43 We need to figure out how to partner with them and plan for the future.
11:54:46 >> Absolutely! Alex?
11:54:54 >> Alex: TV announce wants come out every day, either the mayor or the governor come out and they have a daily announcement.
11:55:05 That type of information is the transcript that is not often uploaded online and the Deaf blind community, therefore, does not have access to what is going on.
11:55:17 And I feel like that is the responsibility of the state to ensure that every address gets a transcript created for it.
11:55:22 So that the Deaf blind community can have access to it so that's the one suggestion that I could think of.
11:55:31 >> Agreed! Accessibility really needs to improve.
11:55:37 So what are your thoughts on the governor, his daily, you know, messaging about the virus?
11:55:41 So in the past, he didn't have the CDI. How do you all feel about that?
11:55:43 And what is your reaction to that?
11:55:56 Patrice? I see your reaction.
11:56:11 >> Patrice: It's very good. It's a tricky question and I'm not sure how I feel but when I watch the mayor with interpreters present, it does make me feel like it's nice that think of and have respect for Deaf people.
11:56:17 As far as the governor providing interpreters, I think that's something that should happen.
11:56:28 For me, as I'm watching the captions to be quite honest, I'm not interested in watching a lot of these news reports because it gets so depressing over time.
11:56:40 Just constantly breaking news interrupting of the different programs and having these statistics and numbers spewed out.
11:56:45 I'm a little bit over that. As far as the mayor providing interpreters, it's nice.
11:56:50 As far as the interpreters in particular, I don't necessarily have strong feelings about them.
11:56:52 But I think they should be there.

11:57:01 And I think there's been three or four people who have tried to sue and the judge reported that interpreters should be provided. F
11:57:09 So kudos for that battle but for me, I'm a little bit indifferent. I don't have a strong feeling about it.
11:57:11 >> Understood, Carlos?
11:57:18 >> Carlos: So I would say I'm privilege in the ability to read English text.
11:57:30 I noticed that initially, my dad would often ask me what is being said and I realized, my dad is Deaf, you know, just like Alexandra and relies on ASL for communication.
11:57:40 When the mayor had his press conference, I could see my dad was able to access the message through the interpreter.
11:57:49 So even though I have access, you know, having a signing person on screen, is incredibly important.
11:57:57 That gives access to members of the Deaf community as well and if we're talking about other members of the Deaf community, like Deaf blind. That's another challenge.
11:58:05 But at least having interpreters there for visual access.
11:58:12 >> Marina: I actually provided a training for NYPD and 911 emergency systems.
11:58:23 And they didn't realize the diversity of the Deaf people and the Deaf community and the variances of language use.
11:58:32 We have everyone from people with competent English skills to people who cannot read and write.
11:58:40 And a variety of mixed languages within our community so we need to figure out how to communicate on a daily basis.
11:58:43 Yes, there are Deaf people who use sign language.
11:58:55 And that has to be a percentage of the New York population and there's no excuse. They these that level of language access because we're a part of this population.
11:59:05 Regardless of Deaf people's fluency and written English, you can't depend on it as a means of communication. You need to provide equitable access.
11:59:13 >> I would agree. Any other additions to this question? Okay, great!
11:59:19 So thirty years from now, what do you think you all will remember from this time period?
11:59:31 >> Everyone coming together and the effort to unify our resources.
11:59:45 This has really forced us to be much more creative. This is an introspective time to understand what service provision looks like.
11:59:49 And be able to be creative on how we can provide services in the future.
11:59:56 And maybe things that we didn't appreciate in the past, like VRI and hospitals.
12:00:07 I think that it's been a source of contention in our community and now there's a real paradigm shift and we're going to be depend on VRI as another means of communication access.
12:00:24 So we're really starting to reevaluate a lot of things and I think in thirty years, we're going to look back on this time and think that, we have made it through and we have been able to survive through this time.
12:00:26 >> I would agree, Carlos?
12:00:31 >> Carlos: Yeah, this is going to be heavy so consider this a trigger warning.

12:00:40 I think with what is happening today, it's really forced us to take a look at what people with privilege have.
12:00:46 And what marginalized people don't have. So for example, two weeks ago, New York City was beautiful out.
12:00:57 There were two rural neighborhoods in the city. One where there were mostly white people, some with masks and some without masks and no incidence happened.
12:01:04 And then another neighbor, strong black and brown presence, some folks there and we saw police officers being much more aggressive.
12:01:15 Racism happens, ablism happens, autism happens, a lot of inequitable services happening.
12:01:26 And my hope is that while we try to figure out how it is we can move forward.
12:01:34 We need to look at oppression and we need to explore what is not just and what our community needs and how we can better work together.
12:01:49 So that's what I would like to remember, being able to look at that. Look ago the ugly and see what needs to be fixed and rolling up our sleeves for the betterment of our community.
12:01:54 >> So unfortunately, the time has run out. Short closing comments from each of you.
12:02:00 >> Roxanna: I just want to make sure that everyone knows, this is such an important historical moment.
12:02:10 Really, from March 15th until now, it's almost about fifty days. And it's so important that you keep in touch with your loved ones.
12:02:14 For me, of course, it's my children.
12:02:23 And you know, whoever your close ones are, share with your family, stay in touch. It's just so important. Alex?
12:02:27 >> Alec: Yeah, I think two things I want to commit to.
12:02:29 I want to remind everyone that accessibility is important for us.
12:02:39 Please keep fighting for your right to have access. Do not get complacent and think someone can do it for you.
12:02:47 You are involved in your own rights process the other thing I want to mention is be more empathetic towards people.
12:02:59 I can promise you, if you have, everyone has been impacted by COVID-19. You know someone who has lost a family or friend to this disease. Be more empathetic with the community now.
12:03:05 >> Absolutely! I agree. Okay. So I wish we could talk more.
12:03:16 We do have so much to talk about. This has been so heart warming and just, to talk about how the Deaf community has been impacted.
12:03:19 So thank you so much for sharing your experiences.
12:03:24 Stay strong! Stay positive! Stay healthy!
12:03:27 >> Stay safe and stay healthy!
12:03:33 >> Absolutely. Thank you so much! Now, everyone can turn off their videos and bye bye!