MERRIN MCCRACKEN: Welcome, everybody. We'll get started. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Merrin McCracken. I'm the Interim Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training I still have to read that ADCET for short. My pronouns are she/her and I'm a white woman in my 60s with brown hair, a little bit of grey, glasses and wearing a flowery blue shirt which, when I look at it, is a little bit dirty.

This webinar is being live captioned. To activate the captions, click the CC button in the toolbar that is located either on the top or the bottom of your screen. We also have captions available via the browser which will now be added into the chat box.

ADCET is hosted on Lutruwita, Tasmanian Aboriginal land, and in the spirit of reconciliation ADCET respectfully acknowledges the Lutruwita nations and also recognises the Aboriginal history and culture of the land, and I pay my respects to elders past and present and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status. I also acknowledge all other countries and lands from participants in this meeting. I'm on Wadawurrung country in Geelong, and also acknowledge their elders and ancestors and their legacy to us and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us in this webinar today.

Today's webinar, Disability Justice in Education, is presented by Emily Gaspar PhD who serves as an interim Assistant Vice President for University Belonging and Student Affairs at Coastal Carolina University. What brings her here? She is here in Australia as a visiting Fulbright Scholar at Deakin University. This webinar will provide an overview of disability services in the US context and focus on her research about lived experience of practitioners who are disabled who work in disability services. I thought that these two perspectives would be wonderful to share with our colleagues while you're here, Emily, and we're so happy that you've agreed to present this webinar.

Before we begin, a few more housekeeping details. This webinar is being live captioned by Donna from Bradley Reporting and will be recorded. The recording will be available on ADCET in the coming days. If you have any technical difficulties, please email admin@adcet.edu.au.

The presentation will run for about 45 minutes or so, and then at the end there will be some time for questions. Throughout the presentation please feel free to use the chat box with us, as I see that you are, and each other, but please remember to choose "all participants" so everyone can read what you have to say. And Emily will be happy to answer questions at the end. If you have a question you would like asked, please use the Q&A box rather than the chat box and I will look at those and present them to Emily at the end. So thank you so much and Emily, over to you.

EMILY GASPAR: Thank you, Merrin. And thanks to ADCET for having me. I'm really pleased to be with you all today and to have an opportunity to share a little bit more about my research and myself. I am Emily Gaspar and, as you can tell by my accent, I'm from the United States. I'm a white woman in her mid-40s. I've got a headset on, so hopefully I can hear everybody loud and clear as needed, and you all can hear me as well, or use the captions as needed. I'm wearing a black dress, and I've got a blazer on for a little added professional confidence during this webinar.

I am from Coastal Carolina University, which is in South Carolina in the United States, and I grew up out west in Arizona and Colorado, and currently I'm visiting as a Fulbright Research Scholar at Deakin University, which is located in Melbourne, and I am at the Burwood campus with the disability and inclusion academic team.

Before I continue any further, I want to offer an Acknowledgement of Country. Deakin University acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the unceded lands, skies and waterways on which Deakin students, staff and communities come together as we learn and teach through virtually and physically constructed places across time. We pay our deep respect to the ancestors and elders of Wadawurrung country, Eastern Maar country and Wurundjeri country where the physical campuses are located.

This is the outline for our time together. I've got some bullet points on the screen and we have US context. I want to provide a little bit of context for where I'm coming from and what that looks like as it relates to disability resource centres. Then I'll share about lived experiences of disabled disability services directors in the US. That's the research that I most recently completed. The how and the why I researched that, the findings and the implications. Then I'll offer up some more information about my current research project here in Australia. And then finally we'll end with questions, like Merrin offered and I'm glad to answer any questions that you all may have.

First things first, as part of the US context I want to talk a little bit about person first and identity first language. There is a QR code on the screen, and the alt text for the QR code is an AHEAD.org website. That will be in the chat as well. And this takes you to their statement on language. In the US, and what AHEAD has offered, is that person first language and identity first language are important to take into consideration based on what they communicate, kind of the meta communication of those choices. So identity first language is what AHEAD has decided to put forward as the recommendation and what they're going to be using as an organisation. AHEAD is the Association of Higher Education and Disability. Many of you probably are aware of that and frequent those resources as well.

Identity first language is saying something like "disabled person", whereas person first language is saying "a person with a disability", "a student with a disability", "a staff member with a disability". As you can read in greater detail on the AHEAD website, the reason for utilising or suggesting that identity first language is important is because it centres the identity, and it doesn't put us at a distance from that identity. Of course, whomever you're working with or speaking with, or however you personally identify, that's the person that we should follow. When I'm working with a student, if they use person first language, then I follow their lead. I would absolutely not suggest to try to convince someone that they change the language that they use to talk about themselves, but throughout this presentation and in my own research I use both identity first and person first language, and I know that that might not be everybody's choice. I even had an interesting conversation with someone recently about this and how it's different based on different identities and what we think of. It's much more common to hear someone saying "a person with a disability" than it would be for me to say about myself that "I'm a person with whiteness", or "I'm a person with female identity". Like I said to you all, when I'm describing myself, I'm a white woman. So those are things to take into consideration when thinking about language. I wanted to offer that up before I continue on to give a little bit of the US context and the context for which I'm sharing my research.

So more about the US and some of the things that I think are highlights to offer up from the Association of Higher Education and Disability. There have been, I think, eight surveys and then, similarly, eight associated reports that offer up information about the context in the US. This is something that AHEAD manages and they offer it biennially. I've pulled out a few details that I think help sort of set the stage for what disability services and disability justice in higher education looks like in the US.

Some of the report highlights. Disability resource offices, so DRO. That was the term that was used in the most recent report to describe what might be called disability services, disability resource centre, and so on. So DRO is the list of letters that I've used for the rest of these bullet points.

A few statistical details. 49% of DROs are housed in student affairs in the US, and student affairs I've heard here sometimes referred to as student services as well. So nearly half of the disability resource offices are in a student services/student affairs type of division within the organisational structure of the university.

The other half of those offices are in different places. This is not as frequent, but sometimes they're in a university compliance or a legal counsel area of campus, and that certainly gives you a little insight how those offices may be viewed as a compliance structure or compliance resource. Sometimes disability resource offices are located within academic affairs and report through a provost office, so the most senior academic administrator on campus. I can see how that makes sense as well and what the train of thought is, that a lot of times the access plans and accommodations are connected to academic affairs and what's happening in a classroom. But in my case it extends beyond that into housing and meal plans as well.

Then the other spot that I've noticed that disability resource offices are located and also showed up in the report is DEI, so diversity, equity and inclusion. When there are divisions that utilise that name, which is becoming fewer and fewer, sometimes the disability resource offices are located there, because that might be taking on the focus of disability as an identity and trying to move away from the medical model and think about disability as part of diversity, equity and inclusion.

At my university, we were in a student affairs type of division, then we moved to diversity, equity and inclusion. A few years ago that division was sunset and some of the offices from within that division no longer exist and some others were transitioned into student affairs, some currently housed within student affairs. Even at the beginning of this webinar in the introduction, my division was listed as University Belonging and Student Affairs, and just recently, maybe within the past week or 10 days, we've now transitioned to solely being student affairs.

So the next data point, 41% of DROs use the words "access", "accessible" and "accessibility". So that's an interesting thing to note, perhaps even a trend to note. The office that I'm associated with is Accessibility and Disability Services, and that name was in place before I started with CCU in 2017. It's my understanding when the name was under consideration, there was a desire to not solely call it disability services. I don't know that there was this is more anecdotal than data driven, but there was a belief that perhaps some students don't connect with the word "disability" based on stigma they've experienced or things that they've internalised and don't want to connect with that word, or that might be off putting and create a barrier to access, and so how about let's use both "accessibility" and "disability" to make it more approachable for some. Also the term "accessibility" was believed to frame the removal of barriers in a positive way, that the focus of the unit is to create access.

The final statistic on this slide, 29% increase in students affiliated with DROs, so disability resource officers. That's a big increase, and that's from 2018 to 2022, that there was a 29% increase overall based on all the respondents to the survey of students who formally connected and are using or have access to accommodations. At Coastal Carolina University, we experienced from 2017 until I think the last academic year is our most recent data point we experienced a 44% increase, which is pretty large. We started at a low rate of connection and affiliation. I attribute that increase to a couple of things. One, hopefully we have reduced some of the stigma on campus by reaching out to our campus partners, so not solely putting the onus on the students, but helping faculty and staff understand what the purpose of accommodations and access plans are, that it removes barriers, it doesn't make anything easier for anyone who has a disability, but it actually creates more, hopefully, of an even playing field.

Another reason I think that we've had a jump in numbers is that we were previously using a bit of an outdated way for students to connect with us. We expected students to find our physical location, get there during standard operating hours, pick up a piece of paper to fill out about themselves, maybe take that home and work on it with a family member, then remember to bring it back during business hours, and after all of that we would sort out what their accommodations are.

So we removed those barriers and have an online intake process to initiate connection and that allows a student to do it when they remember, when they think of it, late at night, on the weekend, whenever they are able to, and I think that's helped us make some greater connections across campus.

A couple more snapshots. I pulled out tables from and the next one will be a pie graph from the report. And I've got a table on the screen and the title of it is the average student to staff ratios by institutional size. I'm going to share what this is starting from largest institutional size moving down to the smallest that was collected through this information. So institutions with more than 30,000 students have a 150:1 student to staff ratio. Institutions with less than 30,000 students have a 205:1 that's actually no, that's right student to staff ratio. Institutions then going down another rung, 20,000 students have a 176:1 student to staff ratio. Institutions with less than 10,000 students have a 120:1 student to staff ratio, and institutions with less than 1,500 students have a 144:1 student to staff ratio. The table provides the students as a column, the staff as a column, and then provides the ratios as well.

I thought this might be of interest to this audience because it may give you some comparison points based on the size and the scope that you all have at your institutions and then within your units.

This next figure is a pie graph. And the title of it: Does your institution have an ADA or 504 coordinator? Before I even describe the graph, I want to make sure I'm clear on what that is and what that means. An Americans with Disabilities Act or a 504 coordinator 504 is in reference to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. So both of these things are references to legal compliance. And an ADA coordinator or 504 coordinator, is not a universal term with a universal set of expectations about what they do. It's different on each campus. Sometimes an ADA coordinator is focused on responding to complaints that happen on campus.

At other times, or maybe in conjunction with that responsibility, they may also be working with human resources to identify accommodations for employees. Sometimes, especially a little bit more in the past, ADA coordinators have worked on a university transition plan, so if an institution has identified that there are built spaces or online spaces, policies, procedures, practices that are not accessible or are not in compliance, then they will develop a plan with their colleagues across campus, and that's the transition plan hopefully to transition towards compliance. That doesn't mean that this person is solely responsible for making all of those modifications and corrections, but they take on the leadership of that.

While I've been in Australia I have not heard of a similar role. That just might be my own ignorance about this type of position or what it's called here. And so that brought to mind maybe that would be interesting for me to share with you all as a bit of the context.

So this pie graph illustrates that 75% of institutions of the respondents who participated have an ADA or a 504 coordinator. 20% said they do not and 5% were unsure. Sometimes this position is entirely separate from a disability resource office, and other times it's a combined role. At my institution, it is part of it's a dual role. So the director of accessibility and disability services also serves as the ADA compliance officer.

Now that we've got some of that context covered, and hopefully that gave you all some interesting snapshots into what it's like and how things are going in the US broadly, and then also as I've related them back to my institution.

I also want to provide some more deep dive, so what did I learn in the research that I completed as part of my dissertation. And that brings us to the lived experiences of disabled disability services directors. And much of what I aim do in sharing what I've learned in this research is centring participant voices. So I want to begin with that in mind and offer up a participant quote from Diane: "It has taken the length of my career to help people understand that disability identities are, and should be, treated as part of that DEI movement that's taking place on campuses all over the country."

The problem statement, so how did I get going on this. Why did I decide to approach this topic? I've got this statistic that kind of hung with me. It's also from an AHEAD survey and report. 43% of US disability services staff identify as disabled, yet there's little to no research about disabled staff.

So a couple of things really caught my attention as it relates to this statistic. 43% is a pretty sizable number. It's getting close to half. And so it seems like okay, that's a group that is noteworthy and noticeable, not just in a qualitative way, but in a quantitative way, and so why isn't there any research. There's been a big increase in research about disabled students in the tertiary setting over the past decade or two. There's been some research, and sometimes more like commentary, on faculty with disabilities. And that's also pretty small, but that does exist. But there's almost nothing about disabled staff. And then particularly, disabled staff who have that personal lived experience but also professional expertise by working in disability services, or professional experience, even if maybe they don't feel like they would want to identify as having expertise. I know sometimes that can feel like an overstatement for some of us. But I found that interesting. We've got this and yet there's not a lot of research about it.

The other piece of it that came to mind is it seems like a lot, and a lot of times when I share this number, people respond by saying, "That's a lot of people who identify as disabled who work in disability services." But then I think about other identity surveying units. In the US there's black student services sometimes, or LGBTIQA, or queer student services. Here I've heard several people offer up information about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student services, or offices that are focused on servicing that student population. So when I think of any of those types of units, I can't call to mind a time when black student services has had white leadership, or white staff members even. I'm not sure I've seen that personally. Similarly, with LGBTIQA student services, I haven't known of straight or heterosexual people who lead those spaces.

My hypothesis would be this connects back to disability and that sometimes being thought of from more of a medical model framework and less of an identity framework and maybe that's where the differences come in. Like I said, that's my hypothesis. I haven't investigated why those differences exist between these types of units, but these are all things that got me interested and more curious to engage with this population.

So the purpose of the research was to understand how disabled disability services practitioners experience their institutions and how, if at all, self-perception of disability identity was attributed to the experience of working at a US institution.

The conceptual framework that I utilise to help inform this research project were the 10 principles of disability justice. And these principles were developed by a group called Sins Invalid. And this is a disability justice performance oriented group. I have the 10 principles listed here and I'd like to share them with you: (1) intersectionality; (2) leadership of those most impacted; (3) anti capitalism; (4) cross movement organising; (5) wholeness; (6) sustainability; (7) cross disability solidarity; (8) interdependence; (9) collective access; and (10) collective liberation.

These principles have lengthier descriptions that are beyond the singular word or couple of phrases that define them. I use these to help structure the philosophy and focus of my research project. I also use these principles to develop the interview protocol and interview questions and to help inform my analysis.

The methodology that I used is qualitative and, more specifically, it's called interpretive, phenomenological analysis, which is a bit of a mouthful and a lot of times is just referred to as IPA. I should offer what the foundational elements of IPA are. It's phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography. Phenomenologically focuses on personal experience, so lived experience as opposed to cause and effect types of research. Hermeneutics is about making sense of someone else's lived experience. So me, the researcher, engaging with someone, hearing about their lived experiences, and then using a process to make sense and make meaning of what they've shared. And then that ideography portion centres lived experience and centres voices.

Researcher positionality is something that most researchers hopefully take into consideration, and it felt especially important to me in this research process. So when I completed a pilot study, which occurred before I worked on the dissertation and the research that I'm telling you about now, I engaged with individuals who had non apparent disability. Sometimes we call that invisible disabilities, sometimes acquired disability. So there were things people offered or contended with where they were like "I don't always feel disabled enough", which like what does that even mean? But I could relate to that as the researcher.

I've worked in disability services since 2017 and I have almost 20 years of experience in higher education, but I feel a lot more concrete in my professional identity sometimes than I do with my disability identity because I acquired a disability in my late 20s. So this brought about some need for me to think through who I am and how I approach my work and my research.

So with all of that in mind, I created a website so that people who were interested in potentially participating in research with me could see a little bit more about who I am and what I have going on, both professionally and personally, and that can make research more approachable for participants when they recognise that the researcher is focused on working with participants and not on them, or for them, or doing something to them. So researcher personality was important for me to investigate further for myself and share with any potential participants.

Speaking of participants, I had eight participants in the dissertation research. They were all female identified directors of disability services and they all ended up being white women. And I'll share a little bit more about that further on, though that wasn't one of the inclusion criteria.

There were folks from all around the United States. It wasn't just the state that I live in currently or a particular region. There was pretty wide representation and there were people from both private institutions and public institutions. After I had a lot of time dedicated to working with those individuals and gathering data, I identified six themes. And I want to share those themes with you all and then illustrate the themes with direct participant quotes. I think that's really important to bring the themes to life.

Theme 1. Participants regularly experience the burden of systemic and individual oppression and ableism on campus. Participant voice Diane: "I'm sitting in my chair in my office and a faculty member, who had several students that were going to be taking the final exam with accommodations, comes in with like five exams in a manila envelope and, you know, goes to hand me the manila envelope with the exams in it and he says, you know, this disability thing is really inconvenient."

To provide some further context Diane, when she says "I'm sitting in my chair", she's a wheelchair user, so she was sitting in her wheelchair and someone came to the office, that's for disability services, and felt fully comfortable saying and describing disability as "inconvenient" to them because they needed to drop off some exams.

Participant voice Lindsey: "I was asked to guest lecture in a class on universal design for future teachers. I get there and it's a lecture hall and there is no access to the front of the lecture, and it's in an auditorium. So I proceed to use it as an example of how this is not universal access. And then for an hour long I guest lecture. I present from the back of the room."

Lindsey, similar to Diane, is also a wheelchair user and so she finds herself in this situation where she's been invited the person has invited her to talk about a topic that's related to access, and the person who invited her was very apologetic and of course felt bad, and then that creates a whole dynamic about is Lindsey trying to help them feel better about the situation. But ultimately, Lindsey was left to present from the back of the room because, quite literally, getting to the front of the room was not an option.

Theme 2. Both the special and troubling relationships participants have on campus are illustrative of the broader campus community. So I've got some quotes about specials or positive relationships and then one about a troubling interaction. Participant voice Lindsey: "It was just kind of this great moment of here's a person with a learning disability, here's a person with a physical disability, different experiences, but finding that opportunity to connect, and then also be able to influence the conversation that was happening around student success and how we were going to define it in our division with the Vice Chancellor in the room."

Lindsey is talking about a moment, it was more of an acute experience, not an ongoing one, but she experienced cross disability solidarity where she was obviously someone who could be taken in and perceived as disabled when she's using a wheelchair and she's in this physical space with others, and that prompted somebody who doesn't always feel like they are known or seen as disabled, someone who had a learning disability to share that with her and to share that disability identity.

Then they had this interesting conversation which was part of a larger division conversation about student success, and she felt just so even when she was telling the story, I could feel it, that she felt so positive about this, that not only did they have this really useful interaction that helped move forward what they were discussing, but it happened in a space with the most senior leader of their division.

Another participant voice, Sara: "A mentor who I identify with as a physically disabled chair user, kind of politicised around disability, and how I thought about disability and how I thought about what meaningful work could be in higher Ed, where higher Ed lacks in terms of disability, integration and prioritising disability."

So Sara's quote and Sara's experience is more of a long term experience in an ongoing relationship, someone that she found mentorship and friendship with in the professional setting, and that person moved her to think beyond her disability identity and the work she does as something that happens where she's identifying accommodations or completing a task, but more about how does this get integrated into our systems and how we think about the entire construct of higher education.

This brings us to participant voice Nora and this is a more troubling interaction: "I have to applaud bullshit to get people to be excited about accessibility. Totally giving them credit not deserved. That is isolating."

Nora was referencing times when she feels like she has to be grateful or express gratitude towards someone who is doing maybe the bare minimum, maybe not even the bare minimum, but they've done something that is moving towards greater access in perhaps a classroom space or some other activity on campus, and she felt like she needed to almost pander to that in order to keep people engaged and willing to move forward with access and inclusion.

But for her, someone who is working on that on a daily basis professionally and also is a person with lived experience and identifies as a disabled person, she found that especially isolating in her campus community.

Theme 3. Participants experience mixed feelings concerning the value of disability on campus. Participant voice Aurora: "Being in the employee resource group, that also feels like a safe space, but as soon as I leave those things I feel like I go right back to having a hidden disability. And part of that is my privilege, I can hide it, right?"

An employee resource group, if that's not a familiar term, is like an affinity group or community of practice and on Aurora's campus there was a disability employee research group. So anybody, faculty or staff, who wanted to could attend this and it was I think maybe on a monthly basis, and in that space she didn't need to disclose or reveal or come out as having a disability because it was known that people who attended this group identified as disabled. And in many ways that felt like a positive interaction for her. Then when she would leave that, because she would go back to having this thing that wasn't easy to perceive or that wasn't apparent to other people about her identity, then she felt this conflict and this "I'm not sure how to feel because it's a privilege that I could pass as non-disabled in terms of disability stigma, but also I don't feel fully seen by everybody else on campus."

Participant voice Rosie: "I basically felt like I had to out myself, which is not a huge deal, I'm comfortable doing that, but it was a really challenging conversation because I was like, you know, I'm not going to have the same lived experience that you have, but both of us (disability services staff) are qualified to do this work, and so just sort of having a really hard conversations about assumptions relative to disability."

Rosie was referencing a conversation she had with a student, and the student was connected with the office and was questioning the abilities of the disability services staff because the staff members did not have apparent disabilities. And so the student assumed that they were not disabled and the student didn't think that that made them the best positioned folks to be doing the work they were doing. So Rosie, as you heard, and as you can see here, she found that to be challenging. Like, "It's okay for me to reveal this, but also now I've kind of needed to prove myself and it's just it's a bit complicated and not straightforward as positive or negative."

Theme 4. Coping strategies and disability management are necessary for participants to navigate campus. Participant voice Beth: "I'm very afraid to make a mistake and forget something. That's the most challenging thing. Because of my learning disability I really get frustrated with myself, but my response to that is put more layers in place, more scaffolding where I can't forget, where I have, you know, my to do list and all that stuff."

Most of us have to do lists and all kinds of stuff to keep us on track, but that gets taken to another level. And in Beth's case and what she was describing, she feels both concerned about how others are going to perceive her and frustration with herself because she doesn't want her learning disability to come across as something that makes her seem negligent in the workplace. So she adds additional scaffolding and additional details to try to make sure that she can prevent that from occurring.

Theme 5. The on-campus experience of participants require acts of resistance regarding normative productivity, coupled with conflicting preferences to maintain productivity. Before I share the quote, normative productivity is the idea that we arrive on time, that we complete tasks in a certain amount of time, have due dates, use our calendaring functions. Kind of, as it says, normative ways to identify that yes, you're meeting the mark, and this is productive and positive. So there were both feelings of resistance about this and a need and a preference to maintain productivity.

Participant voice Diane: "Here's the problem with that attitude of evaluating our productivity and our effectiveness. By its nature what we do every day is about exceptions to that rule. I think in higher education you're missing the boat if at least part of what you're doing isn't telling stories because the stories are the things that matter, right?"

Diane was referencing the assessment expectations on her campus and the requirements that were made of her to provide grade point average information, retention statistics and completion statistics. And of course I mean I think of course we want students who engage with our universities to ultimately learn things, be able to demonstrate their knowledge and then graduate and move forward with whatever comes next for them. That's a pretty common shared plan and goal. But we're working within a structure where the students that we're working with were not in mind when higher education was created and so it misses out on part of the story if all we're doing is looking at these productivity numbers and we're not thinking more comprehensively and holistically and thinking about things that happen sort of outside the box because that tells the more complete story of disability on campus and that's how Diane felt.

The final theme, theme 6. Identities that intersect with disability create nuance and add depth of understanding to the lived experiences of participants. Participant voice Aurora: "I wonder if a man would have had to face the same situations." Aurora was reflecting on a situation, and the situation itself was of less importance. What was more interesting and meaningful in our interaction was that Aurora was like, "I don't know if this is because I'm a woman, because I'm disabled, because I'm a white woman", so on and so forth. And she wonders these things about things that happen on campus and experiences that she has. And then she wonders, like, would that happen to someone who is in what is considered a more privileged, dominant, normative role? Would that happen? Would this happen to a man?

Participant voice Joanne: "I see similarities between what people of colour are experiencing and what I, as a person with a disability, experience. I need to be careful because I don't want to I don't want to minimise their experience, but then sometimes I wonder if having a disability cancels some of that white privilege out. Do I not get asked to be on as many committees because I'm blind and people then have to think about accessibility?"

This was a very thoughtful element of an interaction that Joanne and I had in the interview process. And she was being very vulnerable and reflective. She was absolutely trying to voice her real true complicated feelings without conflating one identity for another. As you can see in the quote she's like, "I'm not sure, is this like that? Is being disabled like being a person of colour in some ways? Are these marginalised identities parallel in some ways?"

And then ending with this question that she has of her colleagues, is she sometimes excluded because people do not know how to make her inclusion possible? They're afraid and they don't know and they're without the context and the information. They're not figuring it out or seeking out resources or asking questions, and so do they just not include her because that's additional labour on them?

So with all of those stories and themes in mind there are nine implications and I think of this as like the so what? Now what? We've got all this information but what do we do with this. It's great to hear peoples’ experiences but what do we do with this? And implications are things we take into consideration both for future research, for practice and policy, like how can this change what we do moving forward. There's nine of these. Normalise disability as an identity not a diagnosis to be cured. 2. Include disability in institutional diversity, equity and inclusion values and actions. Even if I took out DEI, since that's a current issue of its own, so to say, I would still move forward with include disability in institutional values and actions.

3. Expect full access and inclusion from all campus members, not simply compliance. 4. Proactively identify inaccessible built spaces, policies and practices and make modifications instead of relying on the retroactive use of an accommodation. 5. Identify and promote disabled leaders. While there's not an asterisk on this slide, I'd like to add a verbal asterisk, which is not identify and promote disabled leaders because they're disabled, like raise your hand if you're disabled and now you get a promotion. Nothing flippant of that sort. More of the inverse of what Joanne shared. Not avoiding the promotion of people who have been excellent leaders and who are ready to take on the next step because they're disabled and because we're not sure how that's going to work. That is what I'm suggesting. Remove that barrier of being able to identify and promote the disabled leaders and go ahead and do it. That's what I think should be happening.

6. Incorporate the 10 principles of disability justice into both practice and research. So those 10 principles I shared from Sins Invalid towards the beginning of our time together. I believe those should be incorporated into practice, so the things we do in disability resource centres and into research, and I think that practice in research I include they both here because I think they need to be more intertwined and speaking to each other, and the researchers should be engaging with the practitioners and hopefully vice versa.

7. Intentionally avoid and address colour evasiveness. I mentioned this earlier. All of the participants in my study ended up being white people, white women in particular, and being white was not an inclusion criteria. And there are researchers, Stapleton and James, who define colour evasiveness as a racist ideology rooted into white supremacy to avoid accountability and acknowledgement. And I don't want to perpetuate that. So as a white researcher myself who ended up having all white participants, I contended with this and wrote about it in my dissertation and other articles and documents.

I think that there's reasons that this happened that I can't just say, "Oh, I did my best, and I put out a call for participants and I guess people of colour just weren't interested." That would be colour evasive of me. I think for one, there are, according to the AHEAD data, there are a lot of people who work in disability services who are white. That is the predominant race that's represented. Again, I wouldn't use that as an excuse for having no participants of colour. Also, I mentioned that website I created and how that was a space where people could go and see more about what is this research and who is this researcher. It's reasonable to me that a person of colour might look into that and then be like, "Okay, this is going to be about identity, this is some time I'm going to need to dedicate on a one-on-one conversation and I don't know this white woman. She might be great and she might not", and that might not be something that someone's willing to engage in and participate in the labour of doing that. So I recognise those things are true and I want to continue to address that in my research practices.

8. Initiate employee resource groups. I mentioned one that Aurora was a part of, and I think that these are useful on campus because they do give people a space where they can speak more freely and candidly, and not even just to share, but maybe even to be able to identify ways to improve the campus community. While I wouldn't want that to be the burden of all the disabled employees on campus, it might be an outcome of a group like this.

9. I believe the Association of Higher Education and Disability should endorse the 10 principles of disability justice. It's great when individuals can embed it in their work and it's also really meaningful when an association can take that on and move that forward. That can have a lot of influence.

I'll wrap up my particular research information with this quote from Sara: "I never wanted to not be disabled. I just didn't want people to think of me in the negative ways that I know and knew people thought about disability. So, it was kind of just like I'm not that, right, I'm disabled, but I'm not what you think that is."

This brings me towards the end of what I have to share with you all, and I want to offer a little bit more about my current research project. You may have seen some calls for participants. I am interested in replicating what I did in the US but with a little bit of a broader call for participants. So not just directors, it's anybody who works in disability services on a university campus. And from feedback from you all and your colleagues I changed the call from full time to anyone. You could be full time, part time, job share. So I really appreciate that feedback and that opened up the opportunity for me to work with and learn from more practitioners in Australia.

I'm interested to see, using the same methodology and the same interview questions, what it's like to be in this kind of dual positioned role where your both professional experience and personal lived experience inform how you take in your campus community. I will do a comparative analysis at some point, but that's not motivated by who is doing it better or something of that sort. It's really just to see what the differences are, what the similarities are, where nuances maybe could inform one area or another.

But first things first, I'll focus on data collection here in Australia and understanding the outcomes from what I learn with you all who agree to participate and are engaged in participating. I am currently doing data collection, but I'm also open to additional folks who are interested in participating in the research. So I believe there's been a link added to the chat about how to get in touch with me, but feel free to contact me if you're interested in participating. And feel free to let any of your colleagues know if you think that this is a worthy cause. I would appreciate any other promotion that you're willing to offer.

That brings me to the end of the content that I wanted to formally share with you all. And now we can turn it over to the Q&A time and I'll stop sharing my screen.

MERRIN: Emily, thank you so much. I think if you'd been able to see us all, you would have seen an awful lot of nodding heads and, oh, and moments of clarity. I think that was just so interesting and so relevant to us here. I'm so interested to see how you go with the work that you're doing here. And while I understand, not making direct comparisons to see who's better, I think there's just so much for us to learn and to explore in this area. And you mentioned that for 43% of disability practitioners, or was it managers, in the US who identify as having a disability, I don't think we have any idea of what that number is here. And so that's so interesting and something that I'd like to pass on perhaps to Darlene McLennan, who is doing a fellowship at the moment and looking in depth at some of this work. And it might be something that's really worth us exploring.

I've got a few questions in my mind, but I'm also going to go to our Q&A as well. I'll ask you this question in fact, you've answered so many of the questions in my mind, which is can this be shared and can we have a role in finding out. A question here from Claire. Given the experiences of hesitancy about disclosing disability in the workplace, how did all the participants disclose the disabilities to their universities, or were some only disclosed via the study? Is the 43% statistic relating to DROs that are officially disclosed or self-reporting?

EMILY: The 43% is self-reporting. So that doesn't necessarily mean that someone has connected with their supervisor about it or is even using any kind of access plan or accommodations in their workplace. The participants in the study that I had, I believe that everyone had disclosed to their supervisor for various reasons, but everybody had not worked formally with, like, their human resources department. And some people felt that that wasn't necessary and they weren't sure how that would be received and they could just kind of manage it on their own, but most people did feel like it was I think everyone felt like it was necessary to share with their supervisor because of some of the more day to day regular interactions that they were having.

MERRIN: That 43% figure, was that something that that was what AHEAD had done some research into, wasn't it?

EMILY: Yes.

MERRIN: Really interesting. Kim asks us, and going back to one of the quotes, so let me just comment on the quote. The richness of that style of research and what comes through in those personal stories is just so useful and raises so many issues. And one of them, Kim asks how do we get VCs in the room to learn and unlearn what they understood/misunderstood about disability, including the importance of that intersectional perspective to the unique lived experiences? I know that wasn't particularly what you were looking at, but we'd love to hear what you think about how we go about that.

EMILY: Yes. I do think about that quite a bit because this research a lot of times when I'm sharing with somebody what my dissertation was about, or when people got excited, like "Oh, you have a research award, you're going to go to Australia, how neat", I could tell in our conversation it usually took almost two descriptions of what it is I'm doing for people to follow that I'm not trying to figure out how the disability resource staff can do a better job. That's not the purpose of this. I'm not trying to make our offices better or more efficient. Not that we're all perfect, but that's not the point of this. The point is to better understand the campus climate, the campus community and what that is like.

So I would I mean in my ideal world I would want what we would call presidents and provosts, for you all, VCs, to read or listen or whatever, anything, to this information to have some insight into what people experience on their campus and how that a lot of people want to talk about what's our campus culture, what's the morale, how do we keep people here, why is there such a high burnout rate, and I think studies like this that actually give voice to individuals who have a deep understanding of the campus culture, would help to reveal the answers to some of those questions.

And the next steps aren't all super complicated, but if I could, what I would want some of the major take away to be is you can't just say, like, we're an inclusive campus and we put this statement at the end of all of our emails and we say this in our mission and vision. There needs to be action that lines up with that. And sometimes the action is just small stuff in the day to day. I've heard many people talk about Town Halls that occur, whether they're virtual or in person, and there are not microphones available. And so when people are asking questions, some people can't hear, whether that's disability related or not, they're missing content in terms of what's going on in that meeting space. Or were using different fun and flashy apps to answer questions and pose questions, and those aren't accessible to everybody.

Even having a chat going that's not monitored by someone can become extremely distracting for somebody who's neurodivergent who is trying to not be sidetracked by something happening over here and stay on task, but also concerned they're missing out on content that's happening in the chat.

So some of those things would be pretty easy to make adjustments for and would enhance the feelings of inclusion on a campus community. I don't know that that answers Kim's question about how do we get the VCs to pay attention to this, but I think part of what I should be thinking about is how to make some of those easy take aways available to folks who might have an appetite for this sort of research.

MERRIN: Emily, thank you. Sadly our time is up, but I think that just even that last answer about those sort of really practical things that we can all take and think through are so useful and I so look forward to hearing more about your research.

Thank you to our captioner Donna as well, and I think that we've all really enjoyed your presentation.

EMILY: Thank you. I appreciate you all providing this space. Thank you for attending.

MERRIN: Thank you, Emily. Thank you, everyone.