Guy: Wait...You're in a wheelchair? Why?

Me: Idk. It started out as a 7 day free trial, bu I forgot to cancel so here I am.

We may be using a wheelchair, but we are not without our sense of humor. Love this response to the inevitable stupid question!
LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, around the world festivals, sporting events, community workshops and celebrations are being cancelled or postponed. We support these decisions but also understand the important role these events play in community life. They serve as an emotional connection to share a common experience, and they build stronger, more resilient communities. We have moved to offering our event experiences online. Last month's Ramps & Beer fundraiser changed from an on-site event to virtual fundraiser within 3 days. It was very successful, raising over $1500 for purchasing temporary wheelchair ramps! Here is a listing of a few we know of are still being held “virtually.” Be sure to connect with us via our regional Facebook accounts to watch for future live events and workshops. And check out our videos on YouTube as we make them available. And be ready to return to our events when it’s safe and we will celebrate at in-person gatherings then. We love our communities!

**May 5**  
- **Peer *Squared Community Meeting**  
  DAC NW Moscow Office via Zoom 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
  Moscow, ID

**May 20**  
- **Benefits Virtual Workshop**  
  DAC NW Moscow Office via Zoom 10:00 am - 11:00 am  
  Post Falls, ID

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**LINC Connections**  
**Peer to Peer Sessions**

LINC’s goal is to support and connect everyone, particularly during these trying times. Please join us. Leave a message and we will get you the Zoom link.

**Wed. May 6**  
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Wed. May 13**  
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
A Tale of Face Masks.

Nose and mouth covered by a brightly colored floral mask, I yell “Stop! Don’t come any closer! Or I’ll text you!!” (Those of you who know me, know that the only reason I have ever texted is because it’s your preferred form of communication, not mine.)

But now the store clerk looks at me, brow furrowed. (Her mouth is probably furrowed too, but I can’t tell behind her ominously serious facemask.) Still, “Ma-a-tzah!” I shout, though muffled and strangled sounding from behind my mask. The clerk must be thinking, “I know people are edgy in these tough times, but this aggressiveness over finding matzah - whatever that is - has got to stop.”

“Yes, where’s the Pass-o-over food?” I say, desperate and still shouting. “Passover, matzah, what?” the store clerk responds, eyebrows raised. No use in trying to explain - with my stuttering and through my facemask and over the store’s background noise - what matzah is. But, shall I tell you, dear reader, since when I write - or at least editorialize - I don’t stutter or, more to the point, don’t have to stutter through a mask while contending with background noise? Answer: matzah is an unleavened bread served at the Passover meal that commemorates the hurried escape of the Jews from slavery in ancient Egypt. (There wasn’t enough time to wait for the dough to rise...)

So, patient reader, what have I learned from endeavoring to stutter out my message from behind a mask, be the mask literal or literary (aka the proverbial veil). That I - we? - always should request disability accommodations, even demand them if no one is paying attention. And it seems our strident times call upon us to take bold steps toward better and brighter accommodations.

Indeed, the next time I’m shopping from behind the veil, or at least shopping for something like matzah - unusual in these parts - I’ll threaten to text the store clerk. But now I understand that the clerk will not be threatened by the aim of my smart phone; she will be relieved...

Miriam works as an Independent Living Advocate in DAC NW’s Moscow office. If you need help with removing a barrier due to COVID-19, please call 208-883-0523.

If you have something for the newsletter email it to dac@dacnw.org
Supporting Children with Disabilities while Schools are Closed

During this strange time of distance learning, children with disabilities and their parents have weighed heavily on my mind. Many students with disabilities are most successful in predictable routines. School closures and other changes caused by social distancing changed our routines with little warning. Our kids are now facing new routines, new teaching methods, less or different therapy, and less time with people they are used to seeing. We as parents may be seeing our child struggle with these changes. It can be hard to know what resources are available and what our child’s rights are during these unfamiliar times.

If you are feeling these things, please know I am too. I recognize that we are all facing these changes with different levels of available time, emotional support from others, and material resources. Despite these differences, the stared shock to our system, and drastic changes can be unifying. I hope to be a resource to others as I navigate this with my family. Here are a few things that we have implemented inner home that are working well for us.

A Daily Schedule: My son likes to know what to expect. We put a white board on the refrigerator that shows which tasks to expect that day. He marks things off as he completes them and gets to choose a fun activity when all school work is marked off for the day. In the past we printed clip art pictures and taped them to the fridge. This worked well before he was reading.

Physical Activity Breaks: We have learned it is important for our son to be able to get some wiggles out between thinking tasks. For us this often looks like inventing his own exercises or dance moves. We also love the free exercise videos on gonoodle.com

Creative Time: Kinetic sand, painting, coloring, drawing, music, building with legos. It has all been a valuable way to give my child a break from the hard work of learning new things in a new environment within a new routine.

Being Silly: We have been looking for opportunities to laugh together as a family. We are also enjoying the opportunity to present school work in a different way. We recently received worksheets from the school speech therapist about practicing conversations with new people.

We dressed in costumes and donned new personalities to engage my son in these practice conversations. We laughed and learned at the same time.

Taking Notes and Communicating with my Child’s Teacher: I want to be able to look back at this time and feel like I used it as a time to study my son’s learning style in a way that I haven’t before. I want to be able to provide new information and specific examples to feed his IEP moving forward. Last week we learned there are sounds that bother my son when he’s working. Noise from a washing machine and heater don’t typically bother him, but they can become overwhelming when he’s doing hard things like math. It makes me curious about how he is responding to similar noises in the class room. I encourage you to document these observations. Document any regressions that you observe. It is within your right to communicate your observations and concerns with your child’s teacher. If schools in your area are providing educational services to students, then children with disabilities continue to have the right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Teachers and parents alike are trying to figure out what that looks like during this time. Creativity and communication are keys to that success.

If you would like to schedule a time to speak with me over the phone or Zoom, contact me via kaylena@dacnw.org or leave a message at 208-883-0523
Preparing for Hospitalization During COVID-19

It is NOT business as usual at your local hospital. If you require medical care - be prepared! It’s up to you and your advocates to protect your quality of life.

Pack a “Grab & Go” Bag: Make a list of what you want with you in the hospital and put those in a bag ready to go. You need to do this NOW, while you are sharp, thinking clearly, and not fatigued.

Checklist of Items: Attach to you body, around your neck, wrist, or ankle, a plastic bag that contains the following items. Keep this bag with you at all times. Things easily get lost, go missing, or are taken away by well meaning healthcare staff. So if you are alone, without an attendant:

- Hard copies of important documentation. Health insurance cards, state ID, medications, list of allergies, communication needs, medical providers contact info. Print this form and fill out.
- Hard copies of your advanced directives, power of attorney.
- Your emergency contact list in priority order. Include phone numbers and email addresses.
- Identify who speaks for you if you cannot speak or communicate with staff.
- Bring signage you want in your room. Think what you want people coming into your room to know about you. Examples: Hard of hearing/hearing impaired - please use communication board. Blind - please introduce yourself and tell me what you are doing.
- Communication tools you prefer. Samples available here. If it’s hard to point use “partner-assisted scanning. Nod or blink yes as the assistant points to each row and asks “Is it in this row?” Proceed the same way pointing to each message. Confirm and repeat.

- Your cellphone AND charger in ziplock bag.
- Your medications. Understand you may not be able to use them if the hospital determines they need to prescribe for you while under their care.
- Use a permanent marker to write key information on your tummy, chest or arm. For example: Diabetic, Blind. Paraplegic, Rheumatoid Arthritis, cannot breath on my stomach, etc.
- Call the hospital you normally use and find out their policy about bringing your attendant or family member. It’s possible due to infection rules, this will not be allowable.

Another resource is asking to see the Chaplain. They can help you with contacting family and may be an advocate for you.

For more information about the ADA contact NWADACENTER.ORG/IDAHO

Dana Gover, MPA, and ACTCP Certification
ADA Training & Technical Assistance
Email: dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com
Phone: Voice & TTD 208-841-9422
LINC is Open Virtually!

While our doors may be closed, we are still providing services via telephone and over the internet. There may be a delay in our response, but we are checking our phone messages and emails regularly. Thank you for your patience.

Peer to Peer Connections

While we may not be able to gather in person, here at LINC we are working hard to keep us all connected during these times. Join us for Peer to Peer Connections via the internet or telephone and connect with others who share your concerns and interests. We may be physically apart but stronger together!
Tuesdays at 1:00 pm - Focus Topic: PA's
Wednesdays at 2:00 pm - Focus Topic: Community
Fridays at 2:00 pm - Focus Topic: PAS Employer
You can register here.


No computer is required. You can call in on the phone. The number is available for the Zoom connections. Email us at info@lincidaho.org. Call us at 208-336-3335. And visit our website at www.lincidaho.org.

Make Personal Protective Equipment Requests

Are you having trouble getting supplies? Do you need cloth face coverings, gloves, soap, or other supplies? We want to help! Fill out a request form here:


We are doing our best to supply you with the protective equipment you need.

During COVID-19 there is a mask shortage. It’s amazing to see the army of seamstresses, quilters, and businesses stepping up to help others. Support for front-line health care professionals - doctors and nurses caring for patients - makes everyone proud.

But other groups are in desperate need of masks and other PPE and we need to keep them out of our hospitals at all costs. Persons with disability, seniors and anyone recovering from illness or injury, and their personal assistants are at high risk and can’t compete for PPE. In-home personal care professionals assist multiple individuals each day and few if any have access to masks or other PPE right now. They need your help.

If you think you can help out, we need volunteers to provide cloth face masks, etc. Donated masks will be distributed to high-risk individuals and their providers. Let’s flatten the curve together!
Email us at info@lincidaho.org. Call us at 208-336-3335. And visit our website at www.lincidaho.org.
As COVID-19 continues to impact our communities we would like to take a moment to recognize people/organizations who have helped their communities.

Bannock County Civitians made a donation to LIFE and with that donation we were able to help stop an eviction of a consumer, allowing them to remain in their homes and provide them peace of mind.

Gavin Monteath, Executive Director of Gateway Transitional Care Center in Pocatello, made a donation to Life of 150 masks washable masks, ensuring that our attendants who continue to provide in home care services are able to help keep themselves and their consumers safe.

Mary Bishop from Pocatello, has sewed over 170 washable/reusable masks and provide those to Life allowing us to provide them our consumers.

Is there someone you would like to recognize for their contribution to the community? Email Mandy@idlife.org

As COVID-19 continues to have an impact on our communities we continue to think of creative ways we can persons with disabilities stay connect with their family, friends and providers. Now more than ever our community connections are more important than ever. Do you or someone you know need help staying connected? Please email chelsie@idlife.org to see how we can help get you connected.

While our office doors will remained closed due to the high risk population we serve we are here to help. Do you need help with durable medical equipment, applying for unemployment, advocating for concerns, accessing health care, applying for social security disability, accessing food or medications? Our Independent Living Specialist can help you with this and so much more. If you need help please call our office today.

Primary elections are coming up on May 19th and the Governor has ordered vote by mail only. Have you registered to vote and request your ballots? Please visit IdahoVotes.gov to register and request absentee ballot. If you need assistance please reach out.

We have a new Facebook Page and an updated website. Please follow us on Facebook at Life, A Center for Independent Living. Our company website is now accessible, please visit us at WWW.IDLIFE.ORG and check out our new site.

Thank you for reading our May updates, if you have anything you would like us to focus on next month or stories you would like us to highlight please email mandy@idlife.org
Let the Sunshine In by James Pickard

What kind of things come out of a pandemic? Other than the noticeable fact of fear, sickness and the possibility of death, not much, right? Astonishingly, business owners can be amazing when push comes to shove in a chaotic time.

For instance, businesses are supporting their employee's in one fashion or another. Here are some interesting examples that I have come across. Aldi is giving every employee a 10% bonus during the COVID outbreak. Campbell's is giving their production line employee's a $2 an hour raise and their frontline employee's $100 a week more. CarMax implemented a policy that if one of their locations closed due to COVID it will pay employees of that location for two weeks after the shutdown.

The deeper I dig the more I find and to my amazement it seems to get better! Corning is providing its employees that cannot work from home additional compensation for the next month. Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban said he is going to find a way to keep paying his arena employees during the NBA shutdown. If Nestle closes its facility it is guaranteeing its workers 3 months regular pay. Plus, they are paying for their qualifying frontline employees an additional 12% for 3 months. So you see, not all is fear mongering doom and gloom.

There are rays of sunshine if you look for them. Case in point - in the service sector Dominos, 7-Eleven and Walmart are hiring nearly 200,000 employees between them during the pandemic. Pizza Hut is in the market to hire as well. They are filling 30,000 full time positions throughout their restaurant chain. Here's a unique spin on things, Qantas Airlines is temporarily laying off people, but worked with Woolworth on conditions to temporarily hire Qantas employees so they can remain working during the down time.

Would you like more of that beautiful sunshine? Well, let's grab that drape and pull it open. Check this out! Allstate is refunding over $600 million to its customers and American Family Mutual isn't far behind, refunding $200 million. The reason being, their consumers are staying home more because of the outbreak. How about this snazzy pledge from the internet service providers across America They are pledging for the next 60 days not to terminate service, waive late fees and open WiFi hot spots to any American who needs them. Even Dominion is suspending all service disconnections due to non-payment during this epidemic period.

So, you see, you're not alone during this crisis even though it may feel as though you are. America is pulling together to help out its citizens during this time of uncertainty and need. Remember, it is a good idea to know and understand what's happening around you. That way you can stay out of harm's way. Just don't dwell on it to the point where it makes you sick. Staying active physically and mentally will stimulate you internally and promote good health.

~ Peace
May is Mental Health Month!

Taking a mental health screen is one of the easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. While one in five people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. Especially during this anxiety-inducing era of COVID-19.

Here is a quick, free, and private online mental health screening. Mental Health America has been offering this for over six years. Nearly five million people have used this screening program to check on their mental health.

Most of the people who have taken the screens have never been diagnosed with a mental illness before. They use these screenings to start conversations with mental health professionals, family members, or friends. This can help reduce the duration of untreated mental illness by equipping people with the tools they need to get help. You can take the screening at mhascreening.org.

Another way to help someone else with mental health is to have an open, authentic conversation about it. Just talking about it can be the first important step in understanding where someone is with their mental health, and you can help them get support or treatment if needed.

Let them know you’re willing to talk about #MentalHealth.
The easiest way is to be open about your own mental health. Allow it to come up naturally in conversation. If you have seen a mental health professional in the past, you might say “I’ve had times in my life when I’ve struggled. I went to talk to someone, and it really helped.”

What can you say to someone you think may be struggling?
Trust your gut, and speak to them privately. Start with an expression of care, followed by an observation. “I care about you and noticed you haven’t been yourself lately.”

Normalize mental health by talking about it directly. Let them know you get it, it’s okay and normal to struggle in response to life’s challenges.

The timing doesn’t have to be perfect.
You may not be able to speak with someone the moment you notice they might be struggling. It’s okay to circle back to it some other time. Let them know you can have the conversation at a time that’s right for them. “Do you want to grab some coffee and talk about it?”

What if they hesitate?
The other person may worry about being a burden. But you can tell them “I care about you, so I want to be there for you. I’m here to listen and support you.”

What if they are really having a hard time?
Reassure them it’s okay to talk about it. Ask for more detail, and let them know they can go to that dark place with you. “What’s the worst thing about what you are going through right now?” And make sure to include resources to get help from a mental health professional.

End the conversation by reiterating that you are so glad for the change to connect on this deeper level about such meaningful things in life. Remind them that you’ll continue to be there for them. Follow up to let them know you are a “safe” person to talk to about mental health! Being available to have a real conversation about mental health is an important way we can all be there for the people in our lives. Reach out and connect with someone today!
ITK CAREGIVERS KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20+ seconds.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do your best to avoid people who are sick.
- Avoid crowded places.

KEEP CLIENTS SAFE
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20+ seconds.
- Stay home and stay away from clients if you are sick.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS
- Fever
- Cough
- Trouble Breathing

ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS:
- Chills
- Shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Contact a doctor right away if you or your client have these symptoms. Report your symptoms before you go to your appointment.

DO NOT SHOW UP TO A DOCTOR’S OFFICE UNANNOUNCED!

WHAT ABOUT MASKS?
The CDC recommends EVERYONE wear a cloth face covering “in public.”
Always wear a mask if . . .
- You are a healthcare worker providing close, personal care to clients, whether you have symptoms or not.
- You are a home care client receiving close, personal care, whether you have symptoms or not.

NEED AN INFECTION CONTROL REFRESHER?
Check out these courses from intheknow:
- INFECTION CONTROL IN HOME CARE
- HANDWASHING
- STANDARD PRECAUTIONS
- AND MORE!

877-889-5515
www.knowingmore.com

Services you control!
For millions of Americans, the Internet is not only their main source of news and information, it also provides an outlet to stay connected. iCanConnect is a federally funded initiative designed to help those Americans with combined hearing and vision loss to connect using electronic devices.  

There are free remote learning resources for families and educators from Described and Captioned Media Program. If you have a student with a disability you can register for free membership and have access to over 8000 captioned and described educational videos. There are even many accessible videos without using a registration! https://dcmp.org

Many hospitals no longer allow in-person sign language interpreters during COVID-19. And everyone is wearing a mask so it may be harder for you to understand them. This website has many tips to help you communicate from smartphone apps you can use, to remembering to bring a placard that says you are deaf or hard of hearing. Check it out! https://www.hearingloss.org/communication-access-recommendations-hospitals-covid-19/

Want to know what color something is? Now you don’t need to ask a friend - just open the Color Inspector to get a descriptive name, like “bold brown”. Or use the Color Filter to shift colors that are hard to distinguish to others you can easily distinguish. The app is available for Android and IOS systems. https://colorblindpal.com

WeDrive is an online marketplace for people to test drive EV products. To ease pressured buying experiences or stuffy showrooms, if you need mobility devices you can get the power to test drive and connect with actual users. Simply sign up and find a Community Driver near you to request a test drive. https://whill.us/wedrive-the-better-way-to-test-drive-mobility-devices/
COVID-19 & Disability: Know Your Rights

As we continue to respond and react to the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s more important now than ever that we know and advocate for our rights. As a person with a disability, we have the right to:

COVID Testing - We have a right to access testing just like everyone else. This means that everything from the physical site to information and all forms of communication. If we cannot get to the testing site, we can request an accommodation. For example you could be tested at home. If we need accommodation at the testing drive-thru, we can request it. No one can be denied access to a test because of a disability.

Communication - We have a right to accessible communication and information in healthcare settings (clinics, hospitals, drive-thru testing). For example, if we use an in-person ASL interpreter, but a hospital restricts visitors due to COVID-19, you can request an accommodation to have that interpreter present. Information on COVID-19 must be available in accessible formats, including closed captions for informational videos, readable electronic documents and braille, and plain language.

Service Animals - We have a right to our service animal. Early in the spread of COVID-19, some speculated that dogs and cats may spread the disease. According to the CDC, “there is no evidence that pets play a role in spreading the virus. Therefore, there is no justification in taking measures against companion animals that may compromise their welfare.”

Equipment - We have the right to our own equipment, like wheelchairs, adaptive technology for communication, or a ventilator. Our ventilators cannot be taken from us and given to someone else if we are admitted to the hospital.

Supports - We have the right to bring the people who support us with us if we are hospitalized, unless they are sick too. It is our right to have the people who understand how we communicate, know our medical details and can advocate on our behalf.

Education - We have the right to a full and complete education, whether from home or in the classroom during COVID-19, despite unequal access to the internet.

In addition to these legal rights, we should also consider the following:

Data - We have the right to be counted. As people with disabilities, we know that disasters impact us more than people without disabilities. Public health officials should be collecting data on how many people with disabilities have become sick due to COVID-19. We must know how many people have become sick in nursing homes and community-based settings.

PPE - We have a right to access personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves and masks. This critical equipment will keep us and our personal attendants healthy, prevent the spread of disease, and keep us out of institutions. The PPE needs of our in-home care providers should be given higher priority.

For more information on your rights, and for disability-related COVID-19 resources, go to [http://silc.idaho.gov](http://silc.idaho.gov) or contact the Northwest ADA Center - Idaho at 208-841-9422
Please Social Distance from Service Dog Teams

The number one reason a service dog is retired early is because of a traumatic encounter with a pet dog. Here are a few tips on how you can prevent a negative encounter from happening when out with your own dog.

1. Do not distract a service dog by talking, petting, or offering anything like food or toys to the dog.
2. Give extra space when you are out with your dog and need to pass a service dog team.
3. Keep your dog close to you and under control when you encounter a service dog.
4. Keep your dog close to you and under control. Do not allow your dog to lunge at, bark at, sniff at, or make any physical contact with a service dog.

Durable Medical Goods Exchange

We are not accepting any durable medical goods at this time since it's difficult to clean them. But we are distributing them. Explain your needs and our trained staff may know the perfect item that will help you!

James Pickard in Moscow 208-883-0523
Valerie Johnson in Idaho Falls 208-529-8610
Todd Wilder in Boise 208-336-3335

TIDBITS!

Categorically left over but no less important

Quotes to make you think!

“Not every child learns the same way. I could not learn through my eyes. Reading was impossible. Math, to compute it in my mind, was impossible. I learned everything through listening.”

~ Henry Winkler, didn’t know he had a learning disability until age 31, when he was diagnosed with dyslexia.
iDentify is an app that allows visually impaired individuals to gain more independence in daily tasks like grocery shopping, self-navigating indoor environments, and reading. It uses artificial intelligence to enable a visually impaired user to click a photo and is able to recognize virtually any object, brand, color, facial expression, handwriting and text, and deliver an audible description of the image to the user. And it works in 27 languages! You can choose from three different modes of object and text recognition as well as even how fast you want the app to speak. Download it from the App Store on iPhones.

http://getidentifi.com

Stay color coordinated! These small, lightweight, washable clothing tags are printed in Braille easily attached. When you know what outfits really go well together, sew or pin a number 1 on that shirt and number 2 on the matching pair of shorts or pants. Get two sets of the numbers, and you can attach the same number to matching shirts and pants. Make a quick braille list and stick it in your dresser drawer so you will always remember what the numbers mean. Perfect for everything from play clothes to dress clothes. About $13.00 for 1-25 tags.

www.maxiaids.com
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL IDAHO CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

www.idlife.org

www.dacnw.org

www.lincidaho.org