

00:00:19.789 --> 00:00:21.140

Hi again, everyone.

00:00:21.140 --> 00:00:22.140

This is Sarah Butcher.

00:00:22.140 --> 00:00:24.750

Again, I'm the co-founder and Director of
Roots of Inclusion.

00:00:24.750 --> 00:00:29.250

I hope you all enjoyed the opportunity to
watch the film.

00:00:29.250 --> 00:00:33.550

We are now going to move to our panel discussion.

00:00:33.550 --> 00:00:41.800

I will begin with some introductions, and
I'm going to ask that if you have questions

00:00:41.800 --> 00:00:47.090

from the film, you can utilize the chat that
you should see there on the right side of

00:00:47.090 --> 00:00:49.820

your screen to ask questions.

00:00:49.820 --> 00:00:54.870

We may not be able to get to all the questions
that everyone has, but we will be capturing

00:00:54.870 --> 00:00:59.870

them, and we'll get answers pulled together
for those who are not able to answer here

00:00:59.870 --> 00:01:08.390

live this evening, and we will make sure and
have those posted in an FAQ on the RootsofInclusion.org

00:01:08.390 --> 00:01:09.750

website.

00:01:09.750 --> 00:01:14.940

So, I'd like to first introduce Miss Jordyn Zimmerman.

00:01:14.940 --> 00:01:18.580

Jordyn is the Board Chair of CommunicationFIRST Board of Directors.

00:01:18.580 --> 00:01:25.619

During the day, Jordyn serves as the Director of Professional Development at the Nora Project,

00:01:25.619 --> 00:01:30.259

which supports Educators in their efforts to teach all students about disability as

00:01:30.259 --> 00:01:32.850

a valued and expected part of human diversity.

00:01:32.850 --> 00:01:38.940

She earned her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Boston College in 2021,

00:01:38.940 --> 00:01:43.500

and in 2022 Jordyn was appointed to serve on President Biden's Committee for People

00:01:43.500 --> 00:01:44.840

with Intellectual Disabilities.

00:01:44.840 --> 00:01:50.149

Miss Zimmerman is passionate about ensuring every student is able to access effective

00:01:50.149 --> 00:01:55.020

communication and exercise their right to a truly inclusive education.

00:01:55.020 --> 00:01:57.759

She communicates most effectively by typing.

00:01:57.759 --> 00:02:00.270

Jordyn, did you want to say hi to everyone?

00:02:00.270 --> 00:02:02.240

I think I want to share something,

00:02:03.240 --> 00:02:04.240

I think I want to share something from my

00:02:04.240 --> 00:02:05.240

00:02:06.240 --> 00:02:07.240

00:02:07.240 --> 00:02:08.240

Sorry.

00:02:09.240 --> 00:02:50.240

[Silence while typing]

00:02:51.240 --> 00:02:52.240

Hi everyone.

00:02:52.240 --> 00:02:54.240

Great to be here.

00:02:54.240 --> 00:02:59.240

I'm Jordyn Zimmerman, pronouns she/her for a brief visual description.

00:02:59.240 --> 00:03:02.240

I am a white woman with wavy brown hair.

00:03:02.240 --> 00:03:07.240

I am wearing a black top and sitting in front of two floral paintings.

00:03:07.240 --> 00:03:11.900

I communicate by typing letter by letter on my iPad, which then speaks words aloud.

00:03:11.900 --> 00:03:17.440

I encourage you to think about the beautiful pauses of silence that occur when myself or

00:03:17.440 --> 00:03:22.620

others who cannot rely on speech to communicate

are sharing, and I think we will give you

00:03:22.620 --> 00:03:27.769

plenty of opportunity to put that ask into action.

00:03:27.769 --> 00:03:29.300

Thank you so much, Jordyn.

00:03:29.300 --> 00:03:32.801

And now, I'd like to introduce Grant Blasko.

00:03:32.801 --> 00:03:37.390

Grant is a young adult non-speaking autistic student who communicates using augmentative

00:03:37.390 --> 00:03:40.260

and alternative communication, also known as AAC.

00:03:40.260 --> 00:03:45.129

He lives in Mercer Island, Washington, where he currently attends Bellevue College.

00:03:45.129 --> 00:03:51.400

He's also a University of Washington Do It scholar and an active member of TASH's National

00:03:51.400 --> 00:03:56.170

Communication Access Work Group, and he's the advisory council member of CommunicationFIRST.

00:03:56.170 --> 00:04:01.799

Grant is passionate about curriculum accessibility, Universal Design for Learning, and inclusive

00:04:01.799 --> 00:04:03.200

practices.

00:04:03.200 --> 00:04:08.310

He's motivated by the opportunity to stand up for the systemic change needed to improve

00:04:08.310 --> 00:04:13.390

the lives and educational access of disabled individuals, especially those impacted by

00:04:13.390 --> 00:04:16.130

autism and communication challenges.

00:04:16.130 --> 00:04:19.199

Grant communicates expressively by typing.

00:04:19.199 --> 00:04:26.400

Grant, would you like to say hi to everyone?

00:04:26.400 --> 00:04:31.120

Hi everyone, my name is Grant Blasko, and I am 20 years old.

00:04:31.120 --> 00:04:36.130

I communicate primarily with augmented and alternative communication or AAC.

00:04:36.130 --> 00:04:41.139

I'm currently a student at Bellevue College, finishing up my sophomore year in college

00:04:41.139 --> 00:04:44.740

with a plan to pursue a degree in social sciences.

00:04:44.740 --> 00:04:50.210

I am also a third-year Do It scholar at the University of Washington and an advisory council

00:04:50.210 --> 00:04:52.949

member of CommunicationFIRST.

00:04:54.920 --> 00:04:56.320

Thank you, Grant

00:04:56.320 --> 00:05:08.320

So happy to be here exclamation marks.

00:05:08.320 --> 00:05:11.560

So happy to be here!

00:05:11.560 --> 00:05:12.160

Thank you, Grant.

00:05:12.160 --> 00:05:14.810

We're so glad you can be here with us.

00:05:14.810 --> 00:05:19.850

We also have Jennifer Karls she's also a co-founder and Director at Roots of Inclusion.

00:05:19.850 --> 00:05:23.680

She is a parent of two young adult children.

00:05:23.680 --> 00:05:28.889

She works hard to understand how systems that intersect of the lives of her children, such

00:05:28.889 --> 00:05:34.180

as education, employment, and health care, perpetuate inequities and how the lack of

00:05:34.180 --> 00:05:38.889

communication access in those systems continues to isolate and cause harm to her child, who

00:05:38.889 --> 00:05:45.970

is minimally speaking autistic Jennifer did you want to say hi?

00:05:45.970 --> 00:05:48.930

Oh, Jennifer's sound may not be working.

00:05:48.930 --> 00:05:52.970

All right, we're just gonna let Jennifer wave.

00:05:52.970 --> 00:05:59.919

Yeah, okay, and last but not least, the third part of our trio at Roots of Inclusion, we

00:05:59.919 --> 00:06:01.229

have Cynthia Blasko.

00:06:01.229 --> 00:06:03.990

She's the proud parent of three children.

00:06:03.990 --> 00:06:10.340

Cindy has a surgical background as a physician assistant, and since 2012 she's been working

00:06:10.340 --> 00:06:15.699

with public school districts to support children who type to communicate, first in Montgomery

00:06:15.699 --> 00:06:18.009

County, Maryland, and now in Bellevue, Washington.

00:06:18.009 --> 00:06:23.229

She's advocated, trained, coached, and collaborated with elementary, middle, and high school staff

00:06:23.229 --> 00:06:27.009

to support inclusion for students with complex communication needs.

00:06:27.009 --> 00:06:29.060

Cindy, did you want to say hi?

00:06:29.060 --> 00:06:35.640

I'll just say hello and thank you for that introduction, and we're excited to hear more

00:06:35.640 --> 00:06:36.729

from Jordyn and Grant.

00:06:36.729 --> 00:06:43.639

One other thing I will share is just the way that we will incorporate Jordyn and Grant.

00:06:43.639 --> 00:06:49.820

There, as Jordyn stated in her introduction, there are often pauses where it takes her

00:06:49.820 --> 00:06:50.979

time to type.

00:06:50.979 --> 00:06:56.830

Grant chooses to use a different strategy where he uses an auditory feedback to listen

00:06:56.830 --> 00:07:05.650

to the words, so when you hear the final punctuation,
Grant's system will replay his, when he's writing,

00:07:05.650 --> 00:07:12.020

but for his pre-written responses, you'll
hear the entire thing at once.

00:07:12.020 --> 00:07:18.979

So there's always a choice among AAC users
and how they want to navigate their system,

00:07:18.979 --> 00:07:28.419

and then we do as much as we can to create
space and a lot of support and noticing when

00:07:28.419 --> 00:07:38.520

there is a need for someone to step in or
elaborate or um respond to something that's

00:07:38.520 --> 00:07:42.790

happening in the, in the webinar.

00:07:42.790 --> 00:07:44.129

Thank you so much, Cindy.

00:07:44.129 --> 00:07:49.600

So we're going to begin with our first question
and Jordyn, I'm going to start with you, and

00:07:49.600 --> 00:07:53.800

then Grant will move to you to give you an
opportunity to answer.

00:07:53.800 --> 00:08:01.039

So you're both involved on the boards of CommunicationFIRST,
a non-profit that is dedicated to protecting

00:08:01.039 --> 00:08:06.630

the civil rights of people who cannot rely
on speech alone to be heard and understood.

00:08:06.630 --> 00:08:11.639

Can you share a bit about why it matters that

we talk about communication as a civil rights

00:08:11.639 --> 00:08:12.759

and social justice issue?

00:08:12.759 --> 00:11:32.240

[Silence while typing]

00:11:32.240 --> 00:11:39.160

Yes, absolutely, communication is important for every single thing we do as humans.

00:11:39.160 --> 00:11:42.850

Effective communication is really so important in all facets of life.

00:11:42.850 --> 00:11:44.720

I cannot understate this.

00:11:44.720 --> 00:11:50.980

It has been recognized as a fundamental human right, a basis for all other human rights.

00:11:50.980 --> 00:11:56.280

This means that effective communication is necessary for education, emotional well-being,

00:11:56.280 --> 00:12:02.240

access to medical care, citizenship, and voting, social relationships, safety and due process,

00:12:02.240 --> 00:12:05.240

self-determination, and meaningful employment.

00:12:05.240 --> 00:12:12.200

We cannot talk about anything else without first ensuring access to effective and reliable communication

00:12:12.200 --> 00:12:14.360

However, don't mistake my words.

00:12:14.360 --> 00:12:19.280

This does not mean effective communication is a prerequisite for the ideals I have mentioned.

00:12:19.280 --> 00:12:25.920
Those are all human rights too.

00:12:25.920 --> 00:12:28.529
Thank you for that, Jordyn.

00:12:28.529 --> 00:12:32.800
Grant, did you want to share why it matters
that we talk about communication as the Civil

00:12:32.800 --> 00:12:35.160
Rights and social justice issue?

00:12:37.160 --> 00:12:41.800
Think I want to share something from my childhood
and say that I was aware that things were

00:12:41.800 --> 00:12:46.639
unfair long before I had the education to
make me aware of what like words discrimination

00:12:46.639 --> 00:12:48.519
and ableism meant.

00:12:48.519 --> 00:12:53.779
Nonetheless, I felt the lasting impact of
situations that were reenacted every day.

00:12:53.779 --> 00:12:59.389
I get asked all the time to come and talk
to people about the most basic steps to negotiate

00:12:59.389 --> 00:13:03.800
better situations for AAC users, and I've
helped some people open their ideas about

00:13:03.800 --> 00:13:09.640
how to help; however, I will say that I don't
feel safe most places yet and that is because

00:13:09.640 --> 00:13:14.300
communication is such a privilege that most
people, and almost all professionals, still

00:13:14.300 --> 00:13:17.610

don't understand how different life is without it.

00:13:17.610 --> 00:13:21.660

They don't always appreciate how painful it is to enter every setting.

00:13:21.660 --> 00:13:25.529

Unsure that anyone will decide to navigate the problems with me rather than judge me

00:13:25.529 --> 00:13:28.649

when I hit a wall while watching from the sidelines.

00:13:28.649 --> 00:13:34.330

Communication rights are critical to accessing every other human right because our humanness

00:13:34.330 --> 00:13:39.240

is often judged by our ability to articulate a perspective, and that can't happen if we

00:13:39.240 --> 00:13:44.240

are deprived from strategies and technology to compensate for a disability that tends

00:13:44.240 --> 00:13:47.040

to alienate us from everyone we care about.

00:13:52.720 --> 00:13:54.279

Thank you, Grant.

00:13:54.279 --> 00:14:01.690

So, the next question we're going to ask is, what is one thing that you believe is critical

00:14:01.690 --> 00:14:06.480

for people to know about students who do not speak and need access to AAC?

00:14:06.480 --> 00:14:11.400

Grant, we can start with you on this one,

and then we can move over to Jordyn.

00:14:11.720 --> 00:14:19.040

[Silence while typing]

00:14:20.000 --> 00:14:24.240

I think I want to share that we need support to communicate well and be heard, and that

00:14:24.240 --> 00:14:29.320

doesn't mean we can't think for ourselves but is a narrative created by people who have

00:14:29.320 --> 00:14:32.260

never faced the barriers we face.

00:14:32.260 --> 00:14:37.089

It is so important to know what true communication looks like when it is just starting and how

00:14:37.089 --> 00:14:42.981

long it takes to find the courage to try again after long periods of misunderstanding and failure.

00:14:47.880 --> 00:14:50.459

Thank you, Grant.

00:14:50.459 --> 00:14:54.720

Jordyn, what is one thing that you believe is critical for people to know about students

00:14:54.720 --> 00:15:01.240

who do not speak and need access to AAC?

00:15:03.000 --> 00:15:06.690

The idea of speech and language is so critical for people to understand.

00:15:06.690 --> 00:15:12.000

To give an example, in the film, there was a report shown which documented professionals'

00:15:12.000 --> 00:15:19.000

bleak view of my future based on the assumptions

that I was intellectually disabled; of course,

00:15:19.000 --> 00:15:23.240

there is nothing wrong or shameful with being intellectually disabled, and that idea came

00:15:23.240 --> 00:15:28.240

about as a result of my lack of speech, conflated with my lack of language.

00:15:28.240 --> 00:15:30.960

Speech and language are not the same thing.

00:15:30.960 --> 00:15:34.400

Speech is the motor process of expressing language.

00:15:34.400 --> 00:15:41.400

Language is a cognitive process that involves perceiving, understanding, and producing concepts.

00:15:41.400 --> 00:15:45.880

We don't know what people are capable of until they have the supports and services which

00:15:45.880 --> 00:15:51.520

work for them and which allow them to show what they know; however, when we conflate

00:15:51.520 --> 00:15:58.120

the two, then the assumptions made are used to deny services and supports and a robust education.

00:15:58.120 --> 00:16:03.360

This should not happen at all and goes back to the criticality of access to communication

00:16:03.360 --> 00:16:05.360

as a civil rights issue.

00:16:08.360 --> 00:16:09.360

Absolutely.

00:16:09.360 --> 00:16:11.520

Thank you, Jordyn.

00:16:11.520 --> 00:16:15.320

I'm going to move on to the next question,
and then Cindy, if you want to pull one from

00:16:15.320 --> 00:16:19.000

the chat to have ready,

00:16:19.000 --> 00:16:20.600

for us.

00:16:20.600 --> 00:16:25.000

So Jordan, at one point in the film, you show
the PECs workbook.

00:16:25.000 --> 00:16:30.000

The film clearly illustrated how inadequate
that was, but do you think you could have

00:16:30.000 --> 00:16:33.000

learned to use the iPad prior to the age of
18?

00:16:35.000 --> 00:20:05.000

[Silence while typing]

00:20:05.000 --> 00:20:10.080

I often wish I could start from scratch, had
the opportunity to erase so many memories

00:20:10.080 --> 00:20:13.480

of trauma, and try using iPad earlier.

00:20:13.480 --> 00:20:18.720

I had been provided the PECs book very inconsistently,
but pictures and symbols for requesting were

00:20:18.720 --> 00:20:21.880

always used a lot throughout my various environments.

00:20:21.880 --> 00:20:28.640

However, if I would have been properly introduced
to iPad or some other high-tech robust communication

00:20:28.640 --> 00:20:34.120
prior to when I was, at the age of 18, I believe
I could have learned how to use it and how

00:20:34.120 --> 00:20:38.680
to engage in ways that allowed for so much
more beyond requesting, especially items I

00:20:38.680 --> 00:20:40.200
didn't even want.

00:20:40.600 --> 00:20:44.760
I had so much language, and I had an intense
human need to be with others.

00:20:44.760 --> 00:20:50.800
When I ultimately began using an iPad, while
I was resistant to it at first, my hesitancy

00:20:50.800 --> 00:20:55.800
was more about having to carry it, so if a
creative solution, such as a strap would have

00:20:55.800 --> 00:20:58.880
been used with another device, it could have
worked well.

00:20:58.880 --> 00:21:04.480
Of course, I can't go back in time to say
for certain, but I was beyond ready for a

00:21:04.480 --> 00:21:08.040
reliable method of communication when I did
start using the iPad.

00:21:08.400 --> 00:21:13.480
I believe you cannot start providing opportunities
and access to young, but in terms of trauma,

00:21:13.480 --> 00:21:17.720
you can provide access too late.

00:21:19.400 --> 00:21:23.560

Yes, thank you, Jordyn.

00:21:24.480 --> 00:21:28.560

Cindy, did you have a question you wanted to pull from the chat for our next one?

00:21:29.560 --> 00:21:38.593

Yes, so I will highlight this question about trauma.

00:21:38.593 --> 00:21:44.090

How do you process the trauma of past school experiences, and how can we support current

00:21:44.090 --> 00:21:47.809

and past students with the same trauma?

00:21:47.809 --> 00:21:55.360

I mean it, ideally, we would listen to the AAC users, both Jordyn and Grant would comment

00:21:55.360 --> 00:22:01.039

on a question like that, but it might take them some time, so I will start by saying

00:22:01.039 --> 00:22:09.950

that the area of the film where the teacher talked very explicitly about how she created

00:22:09.950 --> 00:22:16.750

this environment, first the signs in the schools where Jordyn could go when she was dysregulated

00:22:16.750 --> 00:22:28.960

and then the way that she just very compassionately and quietly listened and created a safe space,

00:22:28.960 --> 00:22:34.370

and created a mode of reciprocity that felt comfortable to Jordyn.

00:22:34.370 --> 00:22:40.440

So, by just writing on the iPad back and forth and waiting for an answer.

00:22:40.440 --> 00:22:46.940

With a student who isn't yet literate, this might look different; that you might offer

00:22:46.940 --> 00:22:54.830

choices, you might offer a variety of pictures or things like that, but what this teacher

00:22:54.830 --> 00:23:02.370

did was just create this completely respectful back-and-forth interaction and allow Jordyn

00:23:02.370 --> 00:23:11.370

the time to feel safe enough to start to engage again, and I think we see that with so many

00:23:11.370 --> 00:23:16.380

kids, where it just takes a little bit of time, more time than maybe people have time

00:23:16.380 --> 00:23:21.390

for in a school day sometimes, or even at home, it just depends.

00:23:21.390 --> 00:23:30.059

But I do think where the advocates are so wonderful to have involved is that they are

00:23:30.059 --> 00:23:39.960

able to coach both parents and professionals about the kind of time that it takes.

00:23:39.960 --> 00:23:40.960

Thank you Cindy.

00:23:40.960 --> 00:23:45.176

[typing] I think

00:23:45.176 --> 00:23:47.216

I

want

00:23:47.216 --> 00:23:49.760

to

00:23:52.760 --> 00:23:54.680
add

00:23:56.720 --> 00:23:58.120
that

00:23:59.600 --> 00:24:06.120
we

00:24:08.720 --> 00:24:09.662
need

00:24:10.920 --> 00:24:12.720
to

00:24:15.000 --> 00:24:16.480
talk

00:24:16.480 --> 00:24:17.180
about

00:24:23.160 --> 00:24:25.520
Keep going. Let that go for now.

00:24:25.520 --> 00:24:32.800
[typing]

00:24:32.840 --> 00:24:34.240
trauma

00:24:36.720 --> 00:24:37.315
of

00:24:43.480 --> 00:24:44.480
communication

00:24:48.200 --> 00:24:49.880
disability

00:24:52.360 --> 00:24:54.560
with

00:24:57.400 --> 00:25:05.000
Keep going, all right, let that go. Finish it.

00:25:05.400 --> 00:25:07.640
Grant.

00:25:10.800 --> 00:25:14.080
Okay, go back to your screen, please.

00:25:17.000 --> 00:25:22.248
Okay, next letter, you have the s

00:25:23.240 --> 00:25:35.400
[typing]

00:25:35.640 --> 00:25:38.200
students. {dot}.

00:25:38.960 --> 00:25:45.000
I think I want to ask that we need to talk
about trauma of communication disability with students.

00:25:46.040 --> 00:25:47.920
Yeah

00:25:49.000 --> 00:25:50.710
And Jordan, I see you typing.

00:25:50.710 --> 00:25:58.000
Is there something you wanted to add to this
conversation around trauma?

00:25:58.000 --> 00:28:00.400
[Silence while typing]

00:28:04.560 --> 00:28:08.880
I would also add that another example in the
film was when my principal, at a public high

00:28:08.880 --> 00:28:13.760
school of over 1000 students, recognized that
unless I had a strategy where I could begin

00:28:13.760 --> 00:28:18.899

to regulate my body which would then enable me to type more, we wouldn't get past my trauma

00:28:18.899 --> 00:28:20.400
from years of segregation.

00:28:20.400 --> 00:28:25.800
That's where running came in, and it's something that I could do with anyone but also required

00:28:25.800 --> 00:28:28.360
some reciprocal trust.

00:28:33.000 --> 00:28:34.960
Yeah, I appreciate that.

00:28:37.400 --> 00:28:43.600
So, I know it's already come up about literacy skills, and so I wanted to ask you, Jordyn,

00:28:43.600 --> 00:28:46.049
and then Grant, we can move to you as well.

00:28:46.049 --> 00:28:48.419
I'd love to hear your response on this too.

00:28:48.419 --> 00:28:54.400
Were you taught to read and or spell at school, and can you say more about that at all?

00:28:54.400 --> 00:29:36.120
[Silence while typing]

00:29:36.280 --> 00:29:42.000
I was not explicitly taught how to read or spell; however, I don't believe we give our

00:29:42.000 --> 00:29:47.240
environment enough credit in the ability to naturally create a print-rich space and teach literacy.

00:29:47.260 --> 00:29:52.429
There were words and conversations all around me that I was constantly looking at and listening to.

00:29:53.429 --> 00:29:58.269

This was huge, and I think it played a fundamental role in inadvertently providing me with various

00:29:58.269 --> 00:30:01.480

lessons that I otherwise would not have had.

00:30:01.480 --> 00:30:05.920

Might we discuss the major gaps in my skills from the non-explicit instruction, though?

00:30:05.920 --> 00:30:11.320

While I can still convey messages and get different needs addressed, I know more words

00:30:11.320 --> 00:30:16.800

in my head than I can spell, and some words that I have visually seen, I can spell, but

00:30:16.800 --> 00:30:19.960

I don't necessarily know what they mean in every context.

00:30:19.960 --> 00:30:25.320

This is a challenge, and while there are many tools to help, it's definitely one reason

00:30:25.320 --> 00:30:31.000

why explicit literacy instruction is important.

00:30:31.950 --> 00:30:33.640

Thank you, Jordyn.

00:30:33.640 --> 00:30:36.680

Grant, did you want to add to that question?

00:30:41.880 --> 00:30:43.000

{dash}

00:30:43.000 --> 00:30:48.240

I was in both a private school and a public school where I did get literacy instruction,

00:30:48.240 --> 00:30:53.600

but I was falling farther and farther behind

my peers by kindergarten because of my communication

00:30:53.600 --> 00:30:55.800

and sensory challenges.

00:30:55.800 --> 00:31:00.480

Through the fourth grade, I was not getting access to any grade-level instruction.

00:31:00.480 --> 00:31:04.400

When I started to type, it was because I was learning outside of school.

00:31:04.400 --> 00:31:10.200

By the start of fifth grade, we had convinced administrators in Maryland that I needed to

00:31:10.200 --> 00:31:12.440

be learning what other kids my age were learning.

00:31:12.440 --> 00:31:18.160

Neither my parents nor I was sure I would be successful in general education classes

00:31:18.160 --> 00:31:23.320

at that point, but with communication support, I was able to slowly increase the time I was

00:31:23.320 --> 00:31:25.720

in classes with my peers.

00:31:25.720 --> 00:31:31.040

In a few months with a one-to-one paraeducator and general ed teacher planning with the resource

00:31:31.040 --> 00:31:37.440

teacher; I could do English, math, social studies, and science with my same-age peers on grade level.

00:31:37.440 --> 00:31:42.240

I was exhausted at the end of the day, and I had to get parental help at home to get

00:31:42.240 --> 00:31:48.080

caught up with different skills; however,
I think those experiences gave me the access

00:31:48.080 --> 00:31:52.440
to see what my peers were working on each
day, and that set the bar for me to think

00:31:52.440 --> 00:31:54.799
differently about my education.

00:31:54.799 --> 00:32:00.300
At the same time, I spent more time with mentors,
other autistic people who typed, and they

00:32:00.300 --> 00:32:03.690
gave me the perspective I needed to know I
was not alone.

00:32:03.690 --> 00:32:08.600
Both exposures were important for me to learn
how I could best learn and manage my disability.

00:32:08.600 --> 00:32:10.000
{typed}

00:32:13.000 --> 00:32:14.840
Yeah, thank you, Grant.

00:32:16.160 --> 00:32:19.419
Cindy, is there another question from the chat that you want to pull, or respond to or add?

00:32:24.000 --> 00:32:30.179
There are many questions um, the
literacy question and the inclusion question

00:32:30.179 --> 00:32:37.399
I'll take, I'll take one um that was

00:32:39.880 --> 00:32:44.720
the difference between inclusion and

00:32:47.320 --> 00:32:47.960
Sorry.

00:32:47.960 --> 00:32:50.850

Let me get back to it.

00:33:05.520 --> 00:33:06.160

Sorry.

00:33:06.160 --> 00:33:11.160

I'm missing it, but it was a issue talking about, like how people are incorporated into

00:33:11.160 --> 00:33:17.460

inclusion and what that looks like, and the thing that I will comment on related to that

00:33:17.460 --> 00:33:27.440

is the importance of the accommodations, which, even at the elementary school level are very important.

00:33:27.440 --> 00:33:37.760

So, very early on, Grant started being exposed to digital texts and digital documents and

00:33:37.760 --> 00:33:45.400

accessible formats, and what we found was that almost every single year, we had to have

00:33:45.400 --> 00:33:53.670

all of those discussions again and again and again because it because he was usually the

00:33:53.670 --> 00:34:01.090

only AAC user in a class, there just was not an understanding that he needed more than

00:34:01.090 --> 00:34:09.639

just his iPad and there was often a perception that as long as the speech pathologist gave

00:34:09.639 --> 00:34:15.550

him some vocabulary related to the lesson that that would be enough, and so a lot of

00:34:15.550 --> 00:34:22.760

the behaviors that we saw were a result of

just complete frustration that he didn't have

00:34:22.760 --> 00:34:30.679

enough to, to say and he didn't really have access to the curriculum, the accessibility

00:34:30.679 --> 00:34:39.471

was not there, and so that was something that it took a lot of, a lot of collaboration and

00:34:39.471 --> 00:34:45.250

a lot of coaching to make sure that those things were more and more incorporated because

00:34:45.250 --> 00:34:49.240

it really did decrease frustration across the board.

00:34:51.880 --> 00:34:54.550

Grant, did you want to add anything to this question?

00:34:54.550 --> 00:34:58.000

I can come back to you as well, yeah.

00:34:58.000 --> 00:35:01.020

And Jordyn is also typing, so yeah.

00:35:02.000 --> 00:35:04.640

[typing]

00:35:04.720 --> 00:35:05.800

I

00:35:08.000 --> 00:35:09.200

think

00:35:09.200 --> 00:35:12.560

I

00:35:12.560 --> 00:35:14.000

need

00:35:14.000 --> 00:35:15.360

to

00:35:15.360 --> 00:35:16.920

say

00:35:16.920 --> 00:35:18.320

that

00:35:18.320 --> 00:35:19.400

I

00:35:19.400 --> 00:35:20.160

am

00:35:23.200 --> 00:35:24.880

an

00:35:34.000 --> 00:35:39.880

Keep going, finish it. All right, try to let that go.

00:35:39.880 --> 00:35:46.280

Let's try to ignore that right now and finish your sentence, please.

00:35:46.280 --> 00:35:53.600

[typing]

00:35:53.720 --> 00:35:55.880

anxious

00:36:10.200 --> 00:36:11.880

person

00:36:13.200 --> 00:36:14.380

but

00:36:17.680 --> 00:36:24.000

Do one thing, please let, let the other activity go and come back to your screen.

00:36:24.160 --> 00:36:25.160

If

00:36:25.160 --> 00:36:26.800

I

00:36:28.600 --> 00:36:30.300
am

00:36:38.800 --> 00:36:41.400
prepared

00:36:43.400 --> 00:36:43.900
I

00:36:46.880 --> 00:36:47.400
do

00:36:52.320 --> 00:36:53.120
better

00:36:53.120 --> 00:36:54.360
{Dot}.

00:36:54.360 --> 00:37:00.240
I think I need to say that I am an anxious person, and if I am prepared, I do better.

00:37:04.240 --> 00:37:10.390
Yeah, I think all people do better
in there, right, when they're provided what they need.

00:37:10.390 --> 00:37:17.520
And I'll also say that a lot of times, especially
in the beginning, teachers were happy that

00:37:17.520 --> 00:37:25.750
he could just stay in the room, and yet he
didn't feel like a full-fledged student, and

00:37:25.750 --> 00:37:31.490
so they would say things that they meant to
be very helpful, by like Grant, I'm not going

00:37:31.490 --> 00:37:35.940
to hold you responsible for this, or Grant
don't worry about doing this portion of the

00:37:35.940 --> 00:37:45.150

activity, and that was meant to be helpful,
but it ended up othering him, and he took

00:37:45.150 --> 00:37:46.150
it to heart.

00:37:52.120 --> 00:37:53.000
Jordyn, are you ready?

00:37:53.000 --> 00:39:04.480
[Silence while typing]

00:39:05.720 --> 00:39:10.200
I think the biggest thing I'd push is that
inclusion isn't something you do; it's a mindset.

00:39:10.200 --> 00:39:15.880
As you saw in the film, I was fully included
for the first time when I was 20 years old.

00:39:15.880 --> 00:39:18.360
It was really hard.

00:39:18.360 --> 00:39:22.120
There were moments when I would bang my head
against the wall until it bled and moments

00:39:22.120 --> 00:39:25.040
when I was unable to regulate enough to be
in the building.

00:39:25.040 --> 00:39:31.640
People had to anticipate my needs a lot, and
yet I was still able to share space with over

00:39:31.640 --> 00:39:38.320
1000 other students because their administration
believed I belonged, so I believed that I belonged.

00:39:42.520 --> 00:39:45.440
Yeah yeah, that mindset piece is so critical.

00:39:48.000 --> 00:39:52.140
Jordyn, I wanted to ask you some people might

watch this film and get the impression that

00:39:52.140 --> 00:39:57.190

because CARES was a specialized school, so some students might need a specialized school.

00:39:57.190 --> 00:39:59.600

How would you respond to that?

00:39:59.600 --> 00:41:28.640

[Silence while typing]

00:41:28.720 --> 00:41:30.000

Thanks for this question.

00:41:30.000 --> 00:41:35.600

While the film doesn't go into all the logistical aspects of my education and each school I

00:41:35.600 --> 00:41:40.000

went to, it's important to note that while attending CARES, I was also attending my local

00:41:40.000 --> 00:41:43.320

public high school for half the time.

00:41:43.320 --> 00:41:47.760

This looked like me attending CARES for three half days and then being supported to attend

00:41:47.760 --> 00:41:51.024

the local public school for the remaining time.

00:41:51.024 --> 00:41:55.400

It's really difficult to know whether I would have made as much progress and gone on to

00:41:55.400 --> 00:42:01.160

pursue further education and all my aspirations if I only would have attended CARES, especially

00:42:01.160 --> 00:42:06.240

given the segregated nature of CARES, and

I also want to say that the people who work

00:42:06.240 --> 00:42:09.970

at CARES really supported me in the moment,
and I'm super grateful to them.

00:42:09.970 --> 00:42:15.320

However, when students are not successful
in their public school district or in the

00:42:15.320 --> 00:42:19.960

same spaces as their non-disabled classmates,
it's not on the disabled person.

00:42:20.000 --> 00:42:25.080

It's a failure of how the supports, services,
and other tools were implemented.

00:42:25.080 --> 00:42:29.840

That's what happened with me, and it's what
happens with so many students.

00:42:30.080 --> 00:42:34.760

When we implement supports correctly, students
do not need to be segregated and should not

00:42:34.760 --> 00:42:37.760

be segregated as a matter of law.

00:42:42.280 --> 00:42:45.330

Thank you for that, Jordyn.

00:42:45.330 --> 00:42:47.530

Grant or Cindy, did you want to add anything
to that one?

00:42:55.480 --> 00:43:00.680

For years, I have been talking about Universal
Design for Learning and what culture of accommodation

00:43:00.680 --> 00:43:05.680

looks like and I think there is a lot of confusion
about what these terms mean within schools.

00:43:05.680 --> 00:43:10.880

When I walk into certain settings, specifically settings that are used to disabled people

00:43:10.880 --> 00:43:16.960

as part of their culture, like a TASH conference or an Autistic Self-Advocacy Network event,

00:43:16.960 --> 00:43:18.640

they are prepared for me to be there.

00:43:18.680 --> 00:43:24.520

That preparation is part of the broad culture, and it is not an afterthought for one student

00:43:24.520 --> 00:43:26.079

with an IEP.

00:43:26.079 --> 00:43:32.000

So, when I walk into these settings, I feel at ease, I feel considered, and I feel a complete

00:43:32.000 --> 00:43:34.120

lack of stigma around my differences.

00:43:34.120 --> 00:43:39.280

The reason I am successful in those settings is a combination of the broad culture values

00:43:39.280 --> 00:43:42.000

and the skills that I have worked on over time.

00:43:42.000 --> 00:43:48.800

When I think about my experience in K-12 settings, even though I was included since fifth grade,

00:43:48.800 --> 00:43:53.160

my days were still filled with a threat associated with a culture that still is not used to people

00:43:53.160 --> 00:43:55.800

with communication disabilities being there.

00:43:55.800 --> 00:44:01.000

I needed allies to understand the situation and help me navigate but that can be hard

00:44:01.000 --> 00:44:06.360

in schools where there's a chain of command and an established way of doing things.

00:44:09.680 --> 00:44:15.630

And, and I'll add to that, I mean he had many, many good experiences with teachers who truly

00:44:15.630 --> 00:44:22.480

believed in him and administrators who paved the way for Grant to be in those spaces, um,

00:44:22.480 --> 00:44:33.380

but it is along with efforts for inclusion you still have often a para educator or somebody

00:44:33.380 --> 00:44:41.390

who is a support person who is assigned to support a student with complex needs, and

00:44:41.390 --> 00:44:46.440

they may not have a lot of power in their role.

00:44:46.440 --> 00:44:58.050

So, when they run into difficulties, sometimes there's a, there's a lot of fear around pushing

00:44:58.050 --> 00:45:02.890

back depending on who the person is that they're having an issue with.

00:45:02.890 --> 00:45:07.520

If it's a gen ed teacher and there isn't a great relationship between a gen ed teacher

00:45:07.520 --> 00:45:14.720

and a special ed teacher, or if it's, if it's in a class where there might be a feeling

00:45:14.720 --> 00:45:21.680

that these kids don't belong here like it's going to be a lot harder for an ally to help

00:45:21.680 --> 00:45:27.690

a student stay in that environment because they fear for their own safety and security

00:45:27.690 --> 00:45:33.040

as well, and so I, I always bring that up because there are so many good intentions

00:45:33.040 --> 00:45:41.500

in schools and I see that every single day but it's that willingness to learn and, and

00:45:41.500 --> 00:45:49.160

grow and um not be afraid to say when something feels wrong.

00:45:52.160 --> 00:45:55.840

My mom always said the fish stinks from the head.

00:45:55.840 --> 00:45:58.560

(Laughter)

00:45:58.560 --> 00:46:02.560

Cindy, did you want to pull another question from the chat?

00:46:02.560 --> 00:46:03.800

Is there one that jumped out at you?

00:46:08.600 --> 00:46:10.920

There are so many good questions here.

00:46:10.920 --> 00:46:16.980

I do want to say that I have been seeing people ask about recording the chat, and we, we will

00:46:16.980 --> 00:46:22.480

be recording the the chat and collecting these questions, so if we don't get to all of these

00:46:22.480 --> 00:46:29.850

questions during this, we will, um, try to answer them after the fact and post them.

00:46:29.850 --> 00:46:36.910

Yeah, we'll post an FAQ on our website with answers because there are so many great questions.

00:46:36.910 --> 00:46:43.770

Cindy, maybe while you continue to look, I can ask Jordyn first and then Grant, would

00:46:43.770 --> 00:46:46.609

love to hear what you think about this as well.

00:46:46.609 --> 00:46:51.420

What would you like people who've watched tonight to do differently as a result of seeing

00:46:51.420 --> 00:46:55.540

this film and being part of this discussion?

00:46:55.540 --> 00:51:24.000

[Silence while typing]

00:51:24.000 --> 00:51:27.400

First and foremost, believe in your students.

00:51:27.400 --> 00:51:31.040

AAC users show brilliance in classrooms every day.

00:51:31.040 --> 00:51:35.720

However, as someone who has a bachelor's and Master's in Education, I know the system is

00:51:35.720 --> 00:51:37.000

against us.

00:51:37.000 --> 00:51:42.800

I know the system doesn't want us to thrive and, worse, barely wants us to survive.

00:51:42.800 --> 00:51:45.080

Push against systems that are harmful.

00:51:45.080 --> 00:51:50.040

We live with discomfort every single day,
so I'm not asking you to speak up in ways

00:51:50.040 --> 00:51:54.070

which will get you fired, but I am asking
you to speak up in ways which will make things

00:51:54.070 --> 00:51:56.360

a little better for more students.

00:52:00.960 --> 00:52:03.570

Thank you for that, Jordyn.

00:52:03.570 --> 00:52:06.600

Grant, is there something you wanted to add to that?

00:52:08.360 --> 00:52:13.020

I am going to share a quote from a story I
wrote over a year ago about this film.

00:52:13.020 --> 00:52:16.800

As a non-speaking person, this is the takeaway
I care about most.

00:52:16.840 --> 00:52:21.790

The fact is that something as simple as the
golden rule applies here.

00:52:21.790 --> 00:52:26.840

The best intervention and intentions can still
be harmful if implemented without constant

00:52:26.840 --> 00:52:31.280

reflection about what it feels like to be
on the receiving end of that interaction.

00:52:31.280 --> 00:52:37.849

When supporting a student with communication
challenges, the ultimate inclusionary, trauma-informed

00:52:37.849 --> 00:52:43.360

practice may be to remain curious, apologize often, and never stop creating opportunities

00:52:43.360 --> 00:52:49.800
for safety and connection.

00:52:49.800 --> 00:52:53.890
That safety and connection piece is so important, and I've heard that reference both in the

00:52:53.890 --> 00:52:58.850
film and here in your comments tonight.

00:53:02.000 --> 00:53:03.349
Cindy, is there another question?

00:53:03.349 --> 00:53:04.880
There's so many great comments.

00:53:04.880 --> 00:53:06.449
There's many great questions.

00:53:06.449 --> 00:53:14.930
I think, um, one from Grace Bennett, do you think there's enough trauma-informed PD for

00:53:14.930 --> 00:53:15.930
teachers currently?

00:53:15.930 --> 00:53:25.210
And I do think that's being talked about a lot more, but, um, when we talk about trauma,

00:53:25.210 --> 00:53:30.540
and Grant specifically talks about the trauma of having a communication disability, it is

00:53:30.540 --> 00:53:36.099
a little bit different than the way that the training for trauma is happening in schools.

00:53:36.099 --> 00:53:42.890
In, in, in schools it, it's they tend to think of it as the traditional idea of trauma, which

00:53:42.890 --> 00:53:54.020

is events, and experiences, and um and not the chronic exposures, and Grant wrote a beautiful

00:53:54.020 --> 00:53:55.280

piece about this.

00:53:55.280 --> 00:54:04.049

I don't know about six months ago where he identified just what is traumatic and re-triggering

00:54:04.049 --> 00:54:09.800

about having a communication disability, and so when you think about it related to restraint

00:54:09.800 --> 00:54:17.800

and isolation, and the, and the higher likelihood that non-speaking students are exposed to these types of

00:54:17.800 --> 00:54:31.380

interventions, uh, you look at the fact that these kids often don't look like they understand

00:54:31.380 --> 00:54:37.300

as much as going on around with them as as you might think.

00:54:37.300 --> 00:54:44.089

But what they are capable of is picking up on this situation feels the same as something

00:54:44.089 --> 00:54:46.040

I've been through before.

00:54:46.040 --> 00:54:55.099

So, when those criteria start to build, and you have a response, it can often look like

00:54:55.099 --> 00:54:59.559

this behavior came from out of nowhere.

00:54:59.559 --> 00:55:06.359

But what you don't realize is that that student

has has possibly been feeling that threat

00:55:06.359 --> 00:55:14.000

and that building threat, a series of sequenced events that feel similar to what they have

00:55:14.000 --> 00:55:21.990

endured, possibly for years, and so when you see that and, and it goes unaddressed it looks

00:55:21.990 --> 00:55:29.450

like this explosive event, but it isn't, its chronic stress that has been right near the

00:55:29.450 --> 00:55:36.140

spillover point forever, and it doesn't take much to tip it over, and then it looks like

00:55:36.140 --> 00:55:37.290

it was over nothing.

00:55:37.290 --> 00:55:44.720

And so I think that that's the training that we'd like to be a part of and really kind

00:55:44.720 --> 00:55:48.869

of highlight what advocates are telling us about what their experiences are like day

00:55:48.869 --> 00:55:52.170

in and day out with a communication disability.

00:55:52.170 --> 00:55:59.760

As I am thinking about the professional development piece and the training, you know that we currently

00:55:59.760 --> 00:56:03.160

see around the trauma-informed piece, Cindy, what you're talking about and what we've been

00:56:03.160 --> 00:56:07.619

hearing from Jordyn and Grant tonight, the power and the importance of actually hearing

00:56:07.619 --> 00:56:12.720

from the students themselves, and the AAC users themselves, so that these connections

00:56:12.720 --> 00:56:17.810

can be made, because otherwise, I think the most well-intentioned training, if we aren't

00:56:17.810 --> 00:56:22.640

talking to those most impacted by the issues we're trying to change are going to miss the

00:56:22.640 --> 00:56:24.569

mark, so thank you for that.