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January 21, 2019

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>> Good afternoon everyone. This is Ashley Brompton with the Vera Institute of Justice. The webinar will begin in five minutes. If you have a question or need assistance please send us a message in the Q&A pod in the bottom right of the power point. If you would like to download a copy of the PowerPoint you can click on the file you wish to download and then click on download file. Again, we will be starting in five minutes.

>> Good afternoon everyone thank you for joining our webinar today. My name is Ashley Brompton with the center on victimization and safety at the Vera institute of justice. Part of our 2020 series. We have just a few quick logistical items to go over before we begin today. There are two ways to communicate with myself, presenters and other webinar participants today. First the chat pod which some of you have already used. The chat pod is used to communicate with the presenter and other attendees.

You may use the chat pod to introduce yourself and to answer any questions the presenter may pose to the audience. In addition to the chat pod there is a Q&A pod which is used to communicate directly and privately with my colleagues providing tech support. If you have technical difficulties or a question for the presenter please post them in the Q&A pod. If you post about a technical issue in the chat pod by Vera colleagues providing technical support may not see your post.

We would like your assistance in testing the features of the webinar. First the captioning pod located in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen directly below the PowerPoint presentation. The words that I am speaking should appear in the captioning pod. Please note that if you are using the mobile application on your smart phone or tablet you may be unable to see the captioning pod. Instead you will see a message that says unsupported content. If you are on a computer and cannot see the captioning please send us a message in the Q&A pod now so myself and my colleagues can assist you. Next you should see our American Sign Language interpreters. Can you clearly see the interpreter? If you can see the interpreter and the lying is good please let us know in the chat pod.

If you can't clearly see them or the lighting is too dim to see please use the Q&A pod to contact us. Please note that we will be pausing for interpreter changes during this webinar. I will pause for just a moment to see if anyone needs assistance and to allow time for our interpreters to make any necessary adjustments. It looks like it is all clear. If at any time you have difficulty seeing either of the interpreters on the screen today please contact us in the Q&A pod.

Please note we value complete access during our webinar. This means we will insure the complete functionality of the captioning pod and interpreter before moving forward. If we experience a technical challenge you will see a message that reads "we are experiencing technical difficulties, please stand by" we will work to resolve all of these issues as quickly as possible. If the issue can't be resolved, we may have to cancel the webinar. If this happens we will send a follow up e-mail to all attendees. Participants are in listen only mode which means we should not be able to here you but you can hear us. If you can't hear the presenter speaking or you have difficulties with the captioning or interpreting or any other difficulties please enter a message in the Q&A pod to the bottom right of the PowerPoint.

If you called in to today's webinar please mute your line. We plan to have time after the presentation for questions and comments. If you don't want to lose a question or comment during the presentation, please feel free to enter it into the Q&A pod and we will hold it until the end of the presentation. Please don't put

questions to the presenter in the chat pod as they may get lost. If you want to download a copy of today's presentation you can do so by going to the bottom right-hand corner of the screen that says "download presentation" select the document and click download files.

We will be recording today's webinar. A link to the recording as well as the PowerPoint, transcript and satisfaction survey will be e-mailed to all participants following the webinar. The webinar recording will also be posted on the people with disabilities website within one week. A record of attendance is available for download at the end of the webinar. One moment it sounds like someone called in that is not muted so we are going to quickly mute their line.

Great thank you. My name is Ashley Brompton I am a program associate at the Vera Institute of Justice Center on Victimization and Safety and have been since November 2016. I provide technical assistance to disability service providers that are striving to improve services to survivors of domestic and or sexual violence that have disabilities or deaf survivors. I coordinate the national outreach including this webinar series and our monthly news letter.

Prior to joining the institute I was the criminal justice fellow at the national center on criminal justice and disability.

I also advocated on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system in NC and D.C. I have a doctorate from Wake Forest University School of law and a bachelors degree in political science and I am licensed to practice law in FL.

Thank you all for joining us today. We are really excited to bring you information about working with service animals and their handlers because we see this more and more in the work we are doing. Especially among residential organizations, places with shelters or transitional housing programs and we wanted to have conversations about what it looks like to provide accessible services to people that have service animals in these environments.

So we have goals for today's webinar. The first is to increase your familiarity with survivors with disabilities and their use of service animals. About how service animals are used and the things they can do to help and support the handlers and we are going to talk about the legal rights of service animal handlers. The dos and don'ts of interacting with them and explore the complexities and questions that might come up for you as service providers when you are working with people that have service animals. Some of the frequently asked questions you might say.

And then I wanted to provide a significant amount of time at end for you to ask questions that may have come up for you in your work and kind of think through some of that with you. So that is the plan for today. The first thing I want to do is gauge your experience with working with service animals so I am wondering if you could let me know -- type in the chat pod just below the American sign language interpreter -- if you have worked with a service user that had a service animal. Yes or no or I don't know. Feel free to share about the experience if you are interested. We have a couple people saying they have service animals and have worked with emotional support animals but not service animals. So great it seems like we have a big variety of experience as far as people that have both worked with service animals, have worked with other types of assistance animals and people that have not worked with service animals or other types of assistance animals at all.

So hopefully the webinar will have a bit of something for everybody. If you have specific questions that you want to bring up that come from your experience or something you are curious about feel free to type them in the Q&A body at the

bottom of your screen. That way we can keep up those and review those as well to make sure you are getting what you need from this conversation as well. A bit of background information about service animals. And their role in the way that we provide victim services specifically. There is limited research on survivors with disabilities in general. We know that people with disabilities are three times more likely to be victims of violent crime and women that have experienced partner violence are more than twice as likely to report having a disability. So it is disproportionately more likely that a person with a disability is going to experience partner violence. In 2008, not the newest statistic, but they are limited, we know that intimate partners committed 27% of violent crime against women with disabilities and 1.1 percent of crime against men with disabilities.

So over a quarter of all of the crimes that were perpetrated against women were by partners. That is a huge percentage of women needing domestic violence services and transitional housing and other types of programs. We also know that in the United States there are 500,000 service animals assisting people with disabilities daily.

That is just service animals not including emotional support or assistance animals or therapy animals or other types of animals. This is just service animals and we will talk about the distinctions between the different types of animals in a minute. But 500,000 service animals provide assistance to people with disabilities. So we know from talking to a lot of domestic violence programs and sexual assault programs and transitional housing programs that this is more and more common. They are starting to see more and more people with disabilities come in for services. They are starting to make the services more accessible and this is leading to more and more people coming in that are using service animals and leading them to question how they can make sure the services are accessible to people that have service animals.

We also know that survivors with disabilities face unique dynamics when they are experiencing victimization and when they are seeking services after victimization. We know that all survivors face challenges. But there are additional dynamics when a survivor has a disability. Survivors with disabilities face systemic oppression. They may be more isolated or have fewer support networks or options for reporting or for support.

They may be exploited. Whether by the abuser or other people that they are interacting with on day-to-day basis and they may be more marginalized from society and less able to form relationships that they don't -- and less able to navigate the way we set up our service delivery system. They face a lack of confidentiality. Survivors with certain types of disabilities may run into issues around mandatory reporting where service providers are required to report against the wishes of the individual.

Maybe they just face other types of confidentiality changes in the course of regular service provision that becomes an issue. The disability community is very small and tight knit. Maybe they just know each other but there are unique confidentiality issues. There might be a fear of institutionalization. If they feel like they are going to be put into an institution, or they are going to lose their independence. Perhaps because someone, someone other person feels it would be best for them. So they face additional barriers. They may fear losing their personal care services or transportation services, the assistance of their service animal and other necessary services. So they might be afraid if they go to services or into

shelter or into a housing program of some kind, they might lose their service animal or they might lose other supports that they need.

And of course there are traditional barriers in victim service organizations and victim service organizations have started doing a great job of thinking about accessibility for survivors with disabilities but there are still physical barriers, and barriers that need to be overcome and hopefully throughout the webinar we will talk about the ways in any service providers can be thinking about how to eliminate some of those barriers when we are talking about service animal handlers.

And I wanted to review all of this because I think it is important to keep in mind the context that people with disabilities are facing these additional barriers in receiving services and why they might more hesitate to go to receive services, even more than any other survivor that already faces challenges and seeks services. And it is really important to keep that context in mind. Service animals bring so much independence for people with disabilities. They assist them with activities and daily living. They are able to help them with insuring the day-to-day tasks that are addressed and help them with everyday things that might come up and we will go through a bit about the different types of tasks that a service animal can do and some of the way it can assist the handler in a moment. But the other thing to think about is that sometimes having a service animal can unintentionally create barriers when agencies don't know the role that the service animal plays. So for example, a service provider might not know that service animals don't need to be formally certified. And they might request certification or paperwork.

Now you might not think this is a barrier but a lot of people don't have formal certification or paperwork of the service animal's training or role and therefore would be excluded from services if that is required. So that is an additional burden they would have to face because of the presence of their service animal. So what we are hoping that the webinar will help do is substantiate to clarify a little bit what the role of the service animal is and what the dos and don'ts are so the barriers can start to be taken down and more service animal handlers will feel comfortable going in for services and have accessible spaces and programming for themselves.

So I want to share -- my colleague Jennifer Decker is on the line now -- this is one of her two service dogs that she has had in her time. And Jennifer wanted to share about her experience as a service dog handler herself. So I am going to introduce Jennifer and then after I introduce her we are going to take a quick second to do an interpreter change and then Jennifer will share her story. She is a program associate at the center on victimization and safety. She works with striving to improve services to victims of domestic and sexual violence that have disabilities. Prior to working at Vera she worked at the Granite state independent living, NH's only independent living center and she works as a per diem after hours supervisor at a local sexual assault crisis center. She welcomed her first service dog in 2008. Orbit retired after a ten year career during which she assisted Jennifer in maintaining her independence and Jennifer received her successor dog, Ruth in 2019. Jennifer wait one second while we do an interpreter switch and then share your story.

Jennifer you should be unmuted and ready to go. Sounds like Jennifer might be having audio issues so I am going to go ahead and move forward and helpfully she will be able to get her audio set up. Jennifer click the microphone at the top of the screen. I am seeing issues with the audio, it looks like there is a comment in here, Hannah move back a bit from the camera it seems like it might be a bit close. Is that better? Okay I am going to continue and hopefully Jennifer will be able to join us via

audio to share her perspective and her cute little service animals that do so much great work for her every day. This is a picture of Ruth. Who is her new service animal would is just finishing up her training and this is a picture of Orbit who is her retired service animal.

And so I wanted to go through a bit of just the basics on service animals. What do service providers need to know in order to be successfully navigating this. Just the basics. And again we are focusing on service animals in this webinar. We will likely do another webinar where we discuss emotional support animals and where we discuss therapy and assistance animals. Those are very different and we will make some of those distinctions today and I am happy to answer questions that come up. But this webinar is not going in depth into assistance animals and emotional support animals for the simple reason that they are different and we wanted to make sure we made that distinction clear for people.

Emotional support animals are different than service animals. A service animal is defined by the Department of Justice and the Americans with Disabilities act as a dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability.

So the first thing is dog. No other species can be a service animal. The one exception is miniature horses. They can be service animals. This goes back to when the ADA was first passed and there were a lot of people that lived in rural communities that used horses more frequently than we do today and there is the exception for people that are allergic to dogs. The reality is you are unlikely to see a service animal horse in your day-to-day practice. But it is a thing. Another thing to note about the horses is they are regulated by a separate but equally important part of the regulations for the ADA. So if you go in and read some of the basic regulations, they are really applying to dogs. But there are some regulations that are specific to miniature horses particularly around the size and the spaces they can go in and obviously there are additional regulations around service provider expectations when you are talking about a horse.

I just want to pause for a quick moment and make sure the interpreter is still clear. I am seeing a bit of a lag on my end and I want to make sure it is only on my end. If you could let me know? The chat pod if it looks okay? It looks like it is looking good for others. Maybe it is just me. Even better. So service animals are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 and it is the federal law that covers access to public accommodations and other organizations. In the United States. So this United States specific. And it covers service animals pretty specifically. There is also a lot of guidance and regulatory information that has been published. The Department of Justice has done an adequate job of putting out information that is valuable for service providers. There are tip sheets and questions sheets. But it is it does apply to all areas of public accommodation and other areas as well.

We are talking specifically about public accommodation. So this is basically any agency that is serving anyone in the public ever. The biggest thing to know about service animals besides that they are usually dogs is that they are individually trained. They are trained to work with an individual to meet that individual's needs.

They don't just have general instincts to comfort a person or have general training on how to sit and stay. They have specific training to perform specific tasks for that individual. However they are not required to be formally trained. They can be owner trained. Service animals can cost upwards of \$20,000 if not more. Depending on your location and the tasks that you need, many handlers choose to self train dogs and it takes many years and a lot of practice and working together.

But it can be done and that is not formal training. There are a lot of organizations and maybe Jennifer can talk about the organization she worked with to get her service animal but there are organizations to do the training for you, usually the dog starts when it is a puppy and starts going through training and once it is assigned to a specific handler there is additional training that happens to make sure that dog is specifically trained for that handler's needs.

It is intensive training but it doesn't have to be formal training. Interest is no rule that says you have to go to an organization and buy a service animal and that goes to the fact that there is no formal certification required. So you might see things online about service animal certificates that you can buy. Or certifying bodies, there is no certification required for a service animal.

It is really based upon their training to do tasks. Not on any certification or anything that might be formalized in our mind that might make it easier for people but that is not necessarily the case.

The other thing to keep in mind is that service animals are not pets. They are adaptive equipment, as an animal lover that might be something where you are like, they are still pets? But they are extensions of the person. They are helping the person be mobile and independent and be able to interact with their surroundings in a more accessible way. They are not acting as pets when they are working. This is not to say they are always working 24/7. A lot of times they don't work 24/7 but when they are working they are not pets. They are medical equipment that is helping perform a very important function for the handler and that is important to keep in mind.

Another important thing to keep in mind is as a service provider is thinking about how you identify a service animal. There are always questions that come up around how do we know it is actually a service animal? Is there a way we can verify this? I think there is a lot of concern about animals not really being service animals. And the answer to that is that first, you should start from a position of trusting that an individual is telling the truth when they tell you that the animal is a service animal. There are only two questions you can ask to verify that an animal is a service animal. These are the questions from the Department of Justice. These are the only questions you can ask. You can ask is the animal again it will be a dog or miniature horse, a service animal that is required because of a disability? And the person will say yes or no. And then the only other question you can ask is what tasks is the animal trained to perform for the person with the disability?

So you can ask for examples of tasks that they might perform. Those are the only two questions that you can ask. You can't ask if the dog, what the disability is, you can't ask for medical documentation. You can't require additional documentation or certification that the animal is a service animal. All of these things are not allowed under the Americans with Disabilities Act. So really what you are asking for is, is the dog a service animal? What tasks can it perform. The definition of a service animal really revolves around the tasks that it can perform. So as long as you are verifying that it can perform tasks you are getting to the heart of if an animal is a service animal or not. This differentiates service animals from other types of assistance animals. I am seeing questions about the difference between service animals and support animals. Service animals are individually trained to perform tasks for their handler. It looks like Jennifer is back on I want to see if her audio is working.

>> Are you able to hear me Ashley?

>> We can.

>> Okay my apologies my system froze and I had to restart everything.

>> Do you want to go ahead and share about Ruth and Orbit?

>> Sure I will gladly share about the two of them. Again sorry for the technology glitch there. So I have had service dogs as a part of my life for about 12 years. And I recently retired the older of my two dogs Orbit and I am working actively with training her little sister, and I could talk about service dogs all day long just because of -- dogs are great anyway. But as a service animal handler the independence I have gained or been able to maintain as a result of having a service animal has been pretty great. And for the most part, service animal ownership is a positive thing. There are so many benefits to it but there have been barriers over time like what we have talked about in the webinar already.

Those barriers that exist primarily because people are not sure what questions they can ask when they see a service animal or an animal that they have a question -- maybe it is a service animal, they don't know what to ask so they ask nothing at all or they say things that don't quite make sense.

So that is a barrier but it is also something that I have come to not be surprised by that. So I was really glad to hear about the topic of the webinar because it does discuss so many things that service providers need to be aware of and I think learning things about what people can and can't ask about, it is so important to have that shared. That has been a big barrier that I have run into over the years.

>> Thanks so much and Jen is going to stay on the webinar. So hopefully when it comes time to answer questions at the end she will be around so if anything comes up that you want to ask her, about her experiences or some of the training that her dogs may have received. Jen I wanted to ask you, we talked about how service animals don't necessarily need formal training. But that you can either be sort of handler trained -- or go through an agency and I was wondering if you would share about your experience going through an agency?

>> I can. There is the option of an agency or an owner or handler training method. I have known people that have done both. I have gotten both of my dogs from the same training organization. And for me, that worked best because I knew that there was going to be a lot of training that my dog and I would have to do together once the dog was placed with me and I knew that I would not necessarily have the patience or the skill to really get down to those nuts and bolts of actually knowing enough about the dog and how, how dogs brains work to do the actual task training that some of these amazing trainers do. And I am sure that in some areas of the country there are local trainers that work a lot with service animals. In my area of the country there is not a lot so I felt like for me it was going to be a better all around training experience to have the dog come from an organization. That is not to say that with the right combination of dog and handler and working with a trainer in the community, that someone couldn't have a wonderfully trained service dog that they trained themselves.

>> Thanks Jen and Jen is going to stay around while we go through of the webinar so hopefully she can answer questions about service animals in general. Let's do a quick interpreter switch right now. Perfect thank you. So we have talked about what you can and can't ask but what do we know about the tasks that service animals can do for their handlers. When we say you can ask the tasks they perform, what does that look like? What is considered a task? There are literally hundreds of tasks that service animals can perform for their handler. It

can look very different depending on that person's needs and desires and how they are choosing to interact with the people around them.

I put some examples of up here and we will go through them a little bit and there are other examples as well. They can alert, whether an alert to noise -- so they can alert to alarms going off. Noises that might be security risks, smoke detectors, car noises. The front door bell is a common one they can alert to. Different noises that a person might be able to respond to they can alert to physiological changes or physical changes-- drops or increases in blood pressure. Blood glucose. Seizure disorder. I know someone that had a service animal that had epilepsy and when she was getting ready to have a seizure she could not identify that she was going to have a seizure but her dog laid across her legs heavy and pawed at her legs until she lay on the ground. This was a signal her body was going into a seizure and she needed to lie down to protect herself and she would.

So they can interrupt behavior. So there were questions about psychiatric service dogs instead of emotional support dogs. A psychiatric service animal provides support around psychiatric disabilities and for needs around that.

So an example of that is a dog that is specifically trained to interrupt self injurious behavior or behavior that might occur during a panic attack. So this is not just a dog that knows to comfort a person when they are having a panic attack. They have a trained behavior and task to interrupt that task. Something they can do besides general comfort and that is the distinction. That a service animal is doing a trained task. Not just something that may be in their instincts or something they know how to do. I think the captioning might be frozen.

I want to make sure that the captioning is working. It is okay now. So they can open and close doors, retrieve items, they can get help, one of the things you might hear about is a service animal walking alone is probably a sign that something is wrong. They can be contained to receive someone to bring them back to their owner. For example if the owner collapses they can be trained to retrieve someone for help and bring them back to the owner so the person can call 911. They can do all sorts of things. They can also help with balance and mobility and helping people get in and out of wheelchairs and help with navigating transportation. Pretty much anything you can imagine they can be trained to help with in some way shape or form. So there are a lot of different types of tasks that they can be trained to do and the real key is knowing that the tasks might look different for every single person who has a service animal. There are no two people that are needing the exact same task. So when you ask about the tasks the dogs can do you have to keep an open mind about what the tasks might look like.

The real key is they are trained tasks. Not just natural animal behavior. Do any of you know of other tasks that service animals might have done for someone that you have worked with before that you want to share? I am going to give anyone a minute to share something they might have experienced. A couple of people are typing. So Kelly said that her client had sleep apnea because the dog was able to detect unusual breathing. That is a great example I have not heard of. Interrupting nightmares. I could see how that could be helpful for people. Particularly survivors that experience a lot of trauma related to victimization and might have nightmares associated with that.

Another service animal who could detect seizure activity. Yes, for victims of PTSD. So there are a lot of service animals out there that are trained to do a ton of different tasks. Anything you can imagine and the real differentiation is the task. So a lot of you have been asks questions about emotional support animals and the

difference between emotional support animals and service animals and I want to be very clear at the outset that emotional support animals play a very very important role in the lives of people with various types of disabilities and the lives of survivors and I don't want to discount that in any way. That role that they play. However, they are not covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. They are not particularly trained to perform a task. So the main difference is the emotional support animals are really covered in one very specific area and that is in housing. If you are covered by the Fair Housing Act, you have probably heard of assistance animals.

Assistance animals are basically what we would refer to as emotional support animals. Those are animals that are comforting, they are helpful, they are a presence that is important to the individual, but they are not specifically trained to perform discreet tangible tasks.

That is the real difference. They are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act which means they are not covered in publicly accessible spaces. When we are talking about emotional support and assistance animals we are talking about housing, the Americans with Disabilities Act and we are talking about air travel. Airlines. There is an air carrier access app that specifically mentions emotional support and assistance animals. Those are the two times when we talk about animals and access, when we are not talking about service animals.

So again emotional support animals play a really vital role but they are not specifically task trained. So it might be you have a pet who, when you have, maybe you have panic attacks. And you have a pet that when you have a panic attack sits next to you and helps comfort you and you calm down because of their presence. That is a very important role for an animal to play but it doesn't make that animal a service animal.

That is a natural instinct that a dog might have or an animal might have. The other thing to know about emotional support animals or assistance animals is they don't have to be dogs or miniature horses. They can be any species of animal.

So again we are probably going to do another webinar that focuses on emotional support animals and their particular needs and the services that their owners might need. But for the purposes of this webinar it is important to know that they are different than service animals. That they are not given the same amount of access in public spaces. But if you are covered by the Fair Housing Act. For example, if you are a shelter, you might be covered by the Fair Housing Act. If you are a transitional housing program, you are likely covered by the Fair Housing Act. You need to be aware of emotional support animals and assistance animals.

The other thing to know is that the requirements are different. So for example emotional support animals under the Fair Housing Act, you are allowed to ask for some documentation from medical professionals that is different than service animals. So it is important to know the differences and we do have resources available. There is a great community in South Dakota that tells how to break it apart and tell the difference and they have done great graphics and quick reference sheets for people and I would be happy to send that out via request. My e-mail will be on the last page of this PowerPoint and you can contact me and I would be happy to share that. It is also on the website which I will share at end at well but they have done a lot of great work around how you can quickly determine are we talking about an assistance animal or a service animal.

So a differentiation on the difference between emotional support animals. There are therapy dogs. They are different than assistance and service animals. Therapy dogs are, when you think of a therapy dog is usually a dog coming through hospitals

or nursing homes. Where they are kind of visiting and saying hi to everyone. They are really cute and cheer everyone up. They provide comfort and affection and love and are fun to see. Especially for people that might be down because they are in the hospital and sick. They are not trained to perform specific tasks or to interact with a specific handler. So unlike a service animal who is performing specific tasks for a specific person, this is more generalized. This is a dog going room to room in a nursing home and saying hi to all of the patients that are there. This is something like that. The difference here is that they are offered access to spaces at the discretion of the agency. So for example, a hospital can say, you know, we know that we have a lot of people in this unit that are allergic to dogs so we are not going to let the therapy dog go up there because it is going to make a lot of people sick. That is okay. They are allowed to do that. Therapy dogs are not service animals they don't have the same access rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

They could not make that comment and prohibit a service animal from coming on to the floor. So again just a quick differentiator. I know it gets really confusing and if you are interested in the graphic I think it is really helpful to have so please jot down my e-mail address at the end of the webinar and I would be happy to e-mail it out. Because it helps to give a clear explanation of the differences. But the biggest difference I want to keep reiterating, is that service animals are specifically trained to perform tasks for a particular person's disability.

So they are working with a particular person and getting particular task training and it is very individualized. Emotional support animals and therapy dogs are more generalized in their responses.

So if we know we are working with a service animal what are the best practices for interacting with the service animal? The first thing that is important to know is that service animals are trained to minimize interactions with others besides the handlers when working. So if you are a dog lover like me, you have probably been through the airport and seen a service animal and you get all gooey and excited and you want to pet it and give it kisses and you can't because it is working. And it is ignoring you and it should ignore you and you should ignore it. Never pet a service animal without asking permission. The animal is working. It is really focusing on doing a job. If you take away some of that focus you are making -- you are putting the handler at risk. You don't know the type of job the service animal is doing at any particular time. You don't know if it is something where their attention is diverted for a second they could this is a cue that could be life threatening for an individual. So it is important to never pet a service animal without asking. Don't interact with a service animal without asking. The handler might be okay with it. They might say sure you can pet them for a second that is fine. Go ahead. Or the handler might say I would rather you not because the dog is working right now. So that should be respected. So remembering the best practice is to not talk to or whistle or interact at all with the service animal while it is working. I tell people the key is to ignore them. Pretend they are not there that makes it a bit easier if you ignore the animal and its role there. But it is very important when you do that... the service animals in general don't always have the attention span of humans and if they are spending all of their attention span on trying to perform a task and you take some of that attention span and distract them in some way it can be very dangerous so it is very important, the biggest thing when interacting with a service animal is to ignore them. Robert in the chat pod made a great point that handlers always prefer you chat to them instead of the dog. Always interact with the handler. Best practice is to just ignore the presence of the dog completely whenever possible.

Again the dog is an extension of the person when it is working so always talk to the person and interact with the person.

So service animals in programming. How can we as service providers make sure we are providing spaces that are accessible to service dogs and their handlers. It is very important to consider the trauma the survivor and service animal may have both experienced. We are going to talk about some of the things that might come up with service providers when they are working with animals. Some of the questions and difficulties that may arise and one of the things that we always hear is, well what do we do if the animal is misbehaving or if different circumstances happen. But the thing to always remember is that the service animal and survivor have both experienced trauma most likely. Abusers target service animals often as a means of power and control. They know how valuable the service animal is to the individual and how much time, energy and money and support and love go into the relationship between a service animal and the handler. So service animals are targets.

Also remember if you are a residential program, both the service animal and survivor are in a new environment. The service animal is in a new environment too and there might be a changed relationship between the dog and handler. So if the handler has an acquired disability because of abuse they have experienced or the behavior has changed, there might be a different relationship so it is important to keep that in perspective and have flexibility around understanding these relationships and experiences are not just for the survivor but also for the animal.

So as you are thinking through complexities and what a policy should look like, keeping these in mind. And then service animals probably will play a role in programming and service provision. They accompany service users in shelters, at programming and different activities, whatever the case might be, the animal is going to accompany the handler. So think about how to make your space and programming accessible to them. So insuring a physically accessible space with minimal distractions for the animal is helpful. Service animals are trained not to respond to distractions but the more that you can minimize it the better it is.

The other thing to keep in mind, particularly if you are residential and you have perhaps children in your shelter, or other adults, is to reiterate the best practice for interacting with service animals not only for your staff but for other people that might be using their services.

So this is saying to other people this is a service animal and a working animal we need to respect its boundaries and not interact with it and kind of reiterating that. It helps to take the burden off the survivor from always having to do that. Your policies around procedures should be responsive to the needs of the service animal and the handler and make sure they are reaffirming the handler's rights in receiving accessible services.

So I wanted to review frequently asked questions. Let's do an interpreter switch and then we will go through questions from service providers.

Okay so whatever we talk about service animals we always get a few questions that are constantly coming up. The first question is always, where ask a service animal accompany its handler. Where do we have to allow a service animal to go in our facility and in our location. The correct answer to that is service animals must allowed to accompany their handlers wherever the general public is permitted. So anywhere that you would allow a service user to go you need to allow the animal to come with them. The one exception to that is really sterile environments. So think like operating rooms in hospitals. Those are really the only exception to areas where

courts have said, this is a sterile environment and not safe to have a service animal. The majority of places, almost anywhere you can imagine the animal should be able to stay with the handler.

So that is the first question we get asked. The second question is what happens in we have two service users and the first service user is allergic to animals and the second service user has a service animal? And the answer is under the Americans with Disabilities Act you are required to make accommodations for both service users. The handler and the person with allergies. So this means you should develop a policy to make sure that you are providing a uniform response and that you have a protocol in place for if that happens. So you should be insuring that they are receiving equal service provisions. So maybe this looks like putting them in two places in the facility as far away from each other as you can.

Perhaps one of the service users go to a hotel but is still able to receive services. It is scheduling to make sure that they are in different places at different times and they are not doing the same groups or activities at the same time so really thinking through how you can accommodate both of them in separate places while making sure they are receiving equal services.

I am seeing a lot of questions in the chat pod around the kitchen in a shelter. So the Americans with Disabilities Act actually allows service animals into restaurants and other places where there are food and health codes. It is an exception to that. They are allowed in places where there is food. If you are allowing service users, that is not a sterile environment. If users are going in there service animals can accompany them.

As far as shots, technically you are not supposed to ask about shots for service animals. There is a very minor exception errands dangerousness but that doesn't involve if they have their shots. That is more about violence from the animal but you should not be asking about shots for the animal when possible.

And again I will refer you to the specific guidance from the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is a question about emotional support animals and vaccinations. Emotional support animals are covered by a different law and have different regulations. You would have to look at the Fair Housing Act. Off the top of my head I believe you are allowed to ask for vaccinations for emotional support animals in housing. But again you would need to refer to the Fair Housing Act specifically.

As far as paperwork for service animals there is no official paperwork for service animals. So if you are talking about certifications that you can get that say the animal is a service animal, those are usually things that people can buy online they are not really official documentation or paperwork and you cannot ask for paperwork if it is a service animal.

So for service animals you should not be asking for any paperwork. For emotional support animals if you are covered by fair housing -- there is paperwork you can ask for and we will cover that? A separate part of this webinar. The regulations are very different. So if a shelter is covered by the Fair Housing Act they can ask for some paperwork and documentation but service animals you can't ask for documentation. Hopefully that answers some of the questions coming through the chat. I wanted to make sure I did not lose them as we were going.

So for allergies again, if there is an allergy and a service animal, it is about balancing it. How can you work out something that worked for both service

providers? How can you try to figure out a way to make sure the two people are kept separate while still receiving equal services.

Sometimes that requires having conversations with both service users about what they need and what they are looking for. Jody asked about asking about vaccinations since they have a partner that gives free vaccinations. That is different than asking as a way to gate keep if the animal is allowed in. That is basically offering a service. You could say would your animal need vaccinations? We have a partner offering them free of charge or low cost. That is fine that is different than saying we are not going to allow your animal into our facility unless you provide proof of vaccination. Those are very different ways of addressing vaccination.

I think asking about a need for vaccination because you have a partner that offers that service is perfectly fine. I am so thankful for all of these questions. Keep them coming if you have more questions I want to make sure I answer as many as I can for you all in the ways that this is coming up for you. So another thing that comes up is someone comes in and they say the animal is a service animal, and immediately the service animal is trying to bite people. Or is destroying the facility. Chewing the wall. Not house broken. Whatever the case might be. Otherwise destructive or dangerous and there is a sense of what do we do when there is a service animal or someone says this is a service animal and all of this stuff starts happening?

First of all service animals are expected to be well behaved. They are not expected to be destructive or dangerous at any time. They should be under the control of their handler at all time. This is not to say they have to be under the physical control of the handler. They don't have to always be on a leash for example but they need to be under the verbal control of the handler at all times. So they need to be well behaved for the most part.

Again going back to an earlier point, try to remember that often times when a handler and service animal is coming in to receive services they have been through trauma or something significant in their lives that led them to this point. It is a point of transition for the human and dog or miniature horse. And that can alter the behavior of an animal in the short term and trying to be understanding of that is important. If the animal is a threat to the safety of others you can within your rights to ask the animal to leave. You can't ask the handler to leave. You can offer the handler services without the animal.

So if the animal is trying to bite people and is not a safe situation, and you don't know what to do, you can ask them to remove the dog from the premises. That is a very narrow exception under the Americans with Disabilities Act. I would suggest that being a last resort. Before you do that because you could end up with challenges to that. You could end up with lawsuits to that. It could be extensive depending on the circumstances but it is important to know that exception exists in very narrow circumstances so if you have an animal that is just completely out of control, that is something there for you as an option.

But before you leap to that as an option think about what else you can do. Are there other solutions? Can you find out about a care plan for the animal? Maybe they need assistance with walking the animal once a day? Maybe the animal is having accidents because they are having a hard time walking the animal and is there a way you can support them with that? What are other options you can do before you leap to that drastic measure? There is an exception in the Americans with Disabilities Act for dogs that are not house broken. They are expected to be at least mostly house broken.

Again this is a very narrow exception. I don't want to presume that this is a wide exception that you can use all the time. But these are extreme circumstances. If there are extreme circumstances the Americans with Disabilities Act allows for service providers to deny the animal access. Not the person. The animal.

And again I would refer to the regulations specifically for that because they are really nuanced and detailed and it would be hard for me to go through every scenario and say this is an exception and this is not.

So there are a couple of questions coming in about service animals. Is it acceptable to ask for a service dog to be on a leash. I think the majority of the time a service dog handler is not going to oppose that. One of the things that we talked about a lot is service dog handler that has gone through training with the animal and really relies on the animal, most of the things you are asking them to do they are going to be comfortable. If you say it is better the dog is on the leash -- the only time it is a problem is if the person can't hold the leash or if it is not accessible to them to have the animal on a leash but that might be a case by case scenario where you need to talk to the person.

The ADA requires only they be under the verbal control of the person. It doesn't require they be on a leash.

So that is what to do if a dog is destructive or dangerous and the other question is, who is responsible for caring for the animal? So someone comes in the shelter around they say they have a service animal, and suddenly they want you as the service provider to be taking the dog out three times a day and feeding the dog every day, and basically taking care of the dog or paying for the dog's care. The handler is responsible for caring for the animal. The handler is responsible for the costs associated with caring for the animal and all of the day-to-day work that goes into caring for the animal. If the dog is a legitimate service animal that they have worked with, they know their routine and they are good about caring for the animal. But you should not be responsible as a service provider for paying for or caring for the animal in any way. That is not to say that it is not nice to say, you need help letting the animal out? Offering support is always something extra that you can do. But it is not necessarily required. I have known a couple of service animal handlers that don't want any assistance with their dog because it distracts the dog from the tasks they are doing. They don't want to be separated from their dog and that is fine.

So it is really about communicating if you are willing to help with some of that. Recognizing that a survivor who is probably already in a pretty tumultuous situation might appreciate the extra support but it is not required under the Americans with Disabilities Act. So we have a lot of other questions. One is can we designate certain areas where the dog may use the restroom. Not pooping in the playground area. Yes it is completely recommended that you have a service dog relief area that you maybe have a sign up that they know this is an acceptable area for the animal to relieve itself.

We recommend this not only in shelters but at everyday programming, if people are coming in and out, having a place the animal can relieve itself. Hotels is another big one. Anywhere you can specifically have a designated area because you can frame it another way. You can say what it does is make it more welcoming to a service animal handler. They know the animal has a safe place they are able to use the restroom and relieve themselves without trouble or issue.

So you can designate a specific area as long as it is not overly cumbersome to get to like two miles away. It should be fine.

So I am going through the list of questions. If other questions come in feel free to share them. I will try to get through as many as I can get through. We have about -- many of them we have probably answered throughout the course of the webinar. If any other questions have come up, now is a really great time to enter them. It looks like Jennifer is standing by as well so if there are questions that are posed for her I will give those to her. So the first question is what happens when a service animal retires. And I think this is a great question for Jen since her service animal retired recently.

>> Perfect timing for a question like that. It is a question I get frequently. For the most part the retired service animal gets to stay with the handler. That is what happened to me when Orbit retired. I did however need to get a reasonable accommodation form through my landlord so that I could have a second dog that was above a certain size in the apartment complex when I live. My retired service dog was not quite considered a pet. So there was extra paperwork that I had to do. But it was not a big deal. So I have both of the dogs together. I know that other people who may not have the ability to keep a second dog in their home have had their retired dog live out their golden years in the home of friends or family. Someone nearby that they can go to visit and still be able to spend time with that animal.

>> Thank you so much Jen. So the next question is would an emotional support animal be considered a service animal. They are not the same thing. Emotional support animals are not service animals. They are not covered under the same laws and don't have the same access. So hopefully that was a little bit helpful. If you want the graphic e-mail me. My e-mail is on the screen so hopefully you will have time to write it down. They are not the same.

So the next question is besides blindness what are some of the most common types of disabilities that service animals are used for. That really varies. There are people with all kinds of disabilities that use service animals. A lot of people that have mobility or balance issues use service animals and people that use wheelchairs may use service animals. But really it can be just about anybody. It can be a deaf person that uses a service animal to alert to noises and it can be a person with epilepsy whose service animal helps identify and mitigate the symptoms of epilepsy. It could be someone with diabetes who has a service animal who can identify drops of blood sugar. The real key is whatever the type of disability they have the dog is trained to perform tasks that are associated with their needs because of their disability. But there is not a particular type of disability that is most common. I think the public narrative is that people that are blind are most likely to have guide dogs is what they used to be referred to. It is becoming over common for people with psychiatric disabilities. Particularly PTSD and things of that nature to have service animals. Not emotional support animals. So it is more and more common for all types of people with all types of disabilities.

So the next question that came in was about -- we are going to do an interpreter switch before the next question. There is a question that came in around where service dogs are purchased. A service dog can be any dog that is specifically trained. I have seen service dogs that were shelter dogs that were adopted and trained by the handler to perform specific tasks or trained by a trainer to perform specific tasks and are now service animals.

If you are talking about the agencies, there are several agencies that train service animals, usually they have a long wait list but they do exist. I would be happy to send you a few agencies that are out there in e-mail. I would have to

compile a list. But there are quite a few and some of them are specific to certain types of disabilities. So for example there are veteran's groups that train service animals for veterans with PTSD or other disabilities and those are specific. There are some guide dog agencies that specifically train dogs for people who are blind.

So it really just depends on the circumstance but I would be happy to send you some. So another question that came in is what is the responsibility of an agency when it comes to the client service animal. Is the agency responsible for paying bills, provide food. The answer to that is no. The agency doesn't have a legal responsibility to provide any care for the animal. That should be the handler's responsibility I apologize for my dog barking in the background right now. He is just wanting to be involved in this webinar as well. You are not responsible to provide financial support for the animal at all. That is not to say you could not have dog food there in case an animal comes in and needs something. There is a difference in best practice to insure you are welcoming to service animals and their handlers and what you are required to do by law. So maybe having water bowls there in case someone has to come last minute and was not able to pack. Having a dog bed there. Those are not bad things to have but you are not technically legally responsible for any of the care of the animal.

We got a few questions about that actually.

So another question came in about how to differentiate when someone says the animal is a service animal but they are clearly not. How do you separate if there is no need for certification. This is a grey area there has been a lot of controversy about "fake" service animals and fake emotional support animals recently. This has become a real issue. A real service animal is a service animal that is trained to complete tasks. That is really working with the handler and that is trained individually to work with that particular handler. It is very hard because you are straddling that line of, if the animal is a service animal, they are protected under the law but I don't know how to tell. You can only ask those two questions, that is all you can do. There is technical assistance out there for these issues. You can call the protection and advocacy agency in your state for information. But really it is a rock and hard place type of situation as long as they can tell you what service the animal is providing for them, there is not a lot that you can do.

Under the Fair Housing Act a housing provider may require an individual to provide documentation of the disability. Can you clarify? Yes under the Fair Housing Act you are able to request documentation only if you are covered under the Fair Housing Act. So if you are a Fair Housing Act landlord, if you have a transitional housing program, some shelters depending on the circumstances, you are covered by the Fair Housing Act, that means that someone comes in with an emotional support animal you are able to ask the questions. If they come in with a service animal that service animal is still covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act. So just because you are a housing provider doesn't mean you might have a service animal come in and be required to follow the guidance of the ADA for that service animal.

There is a question about whether emotional support is considered a task. That is an interesting question. I would challenge if emotional support is something an animal is trained to do. So a task is something the animal is trained to perform. So emotional support is something I would not think of as being trained to do. That is an interesting question and I would have to think more on it to provide a most robust response to that. I have never thought of it as a task before.

So we are out of time. I see there are more questions that we did not get to today. Hopefully some of these questions about emotional support animals we will be able to cover in our next webinar that we are hoping to host on this topic. We ask that you complete a brief survey. And the survey is available in the PowerPoint above.

Just click on the words webinar survey and it will pop up. It is helpful for you to share your thoughts on the webinar. A PDF of the PowerPoint today and the record of attendance are available for download in the files pod. You just click on the file and click download file. Please note that the records of attendance are only available for download or via specific e-mail requests. They are not e-mailed to participants generally. For those of you that are interested in downloading a transcript you can do so by going to attachment pod at the bottom of the screen and clicking on the button that says save. We will leave of the webinar open for a few minutes to give you time to download this. Thank you again and thank you for all of the great questions. Hopefully I will be able to follow up with some of you individually on some of these questions as well and have a great afternoon everyone.