Welcome to the accessibility considerations in dissemination module of the disability statistics training. This is Megan Henly from the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire. In this module, we will discuss the concepts of accessibility and universal design as it relates to conveying findings from Disability Statistics. By the end of this module, you should know why accessibility matters. You should know some basic accessibility considerations for both oral and written communication. And you'll know a bit about the principle of universal design. While it may seem asynchronous to begin an introduction to disability statistics on the topic of dissemination, we encourage you to consider your audience throughout these modules. By considering accessibility early on, you'll be more prepared to make design and reporting decisions that follow best practices. We offer this module not as a specific how-to guide, but more as a thinking exercise. As a researcher, you likely already consider your audience when determining word choice, presentation and how to summarize your findings. For instance, if you're presenting to an academic audience in a professional publication, you can generally assume that your readers are comfortable with technical language. By contrast, if you're summarizing some data for the local government at a public meeting, you may be careful to provide numbers that are easy to understand, and you'll avoid jargon or field-specific terms unless pressed for details. We would encourage anyone who is new to disability research to take additional considerations to mind. That is, the extent to which their work is accessible to those with disabilities. You may already have experience in this area, particularly if you yourself have disability. This video is meant to provide a brief overview of several ways to present your work in a way that is inclusive of the population you are studying. We briefly cover accessibility in oral and written forms of communication and address common methods of ensuring that your work is readily consumable to people with various types of disabilities. Keep in mind that accessibility is affording the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions in an equally integrated and equally effective manner with substantially equivalent ease of use. Before we go further, I would like to show an example of a graph that someone might use to summarize numbers. This is a bar graph with three vertical blue bars, each one representing the percentage of the population in an age group with an ambulatory disability. It shows that 0.6% of five to 17 year olds, 4.7% of 18 to 64 year olds, and 21.9% of those aged 65 and older have an ambulatory disability. I'll encourage you to pause the video if you'd like to review for a moment and ask yourself, what makes this image accessible? And in which ways could it be improved? Moving forward to considering accessible oral presentations. Let's consider an oral presentation such as an academic conference. There are a few things you yourself can do to make your presentation accessible to your audience. First, check with conference organizers ahead of time to ask whether they have asked attendees about their accessibility requests or whether they have a plan to provide for sign language interpreters, live captioning, or an accessible forum for reaching the presentation site and engaging, if appropriate. If there are no accommodation provisions, ask the organizers why. Often, the needs of those with disabilities are not considered in professional environments. If you are presenting virtually and no ASL is provided, most videoconferencing software has auto transcription that, while imperfect, does aid in accessibility for those with hearing difficulty. If there are ASL interpreters or live transcription, be mindful of your pace of speech, particularly if you are using technical terms which may be a challenge to those unfamiliar with the field. Consider people who are blind or visually impaired. If you rely on interpretation of images or graphs, describe these images, their context, meaning, and interpretation. Avoid saying things just like, "as you can see here." Instead, describe what the audience should be looking for. Of course, you should also be considering the specific needs of your audience. If you know the group has a specific access need, then incorporate that as appropriate. For things like written reports and publications, images, infographics or posters, here are a few suggestions for making products that are accessible. Consider the appropriate use of alt text, short for "alternative text" for images. This option is available in all word processing software packages. It's a way of describing pictures and graphs so that those with screen readers can describe what is shown. Do not rely solely on color to convey meaning in graphs and charts. Screen readers do not interpret color and meaning may be lost. Color can be useful but combine it with numbers or labels. Be sure to use your headings settings in your word processor to indicate structure. This allows for easier navigation of the file, particularly for those using a screen reader. You could also consider providing alternative formats. This can be particularly useful for an infographic, where an image is meant to convey multiple pieces of information. You might consider pairing this with a text document that describes the findings in a single paragraph. Finally, software has an accessibility checker. Use it. Many applications do have accessibility checkers, and these can offer helpful solutions for accessibility issues in your file that may not be obvious to you. Let's return to that image I showed earlier: the bar graph showing the percentage of people with an ambulatory disability by age group. Some things I'd like to note: this has a somewhat simple design, layout, color scheme, and interpretation. But I'll note that the font is a little small and it could be made more clear by increasing the font size on the title and legends. In addition, one other thing that may not be obvious from your perspective is that the alt text does not convey all of the meaning. The alt text applied to this particular image says "ambulatory graph," which was useful for organizing for the person putting the file together, but doesn't convey meaning to someone using a screen reader. It doesn't let them know what the findings are. Keep in mind that alt texts for graphs could be one or two detailed sentences explaining the primary findings. Moving forward, we'd like to highlight some special language considerations across all forms of dissemination. It's important to consider your audience in settling on word choice or language style. For instance, some people with disabilities prefer identity-first language, while others prefer person-first language. Consider the audience you're presenting to. Beyond this, it's also important to consider whether we are gatekeeping that is limiting access to our work through technical language. Particularly in academic circles, written summaries can be difficult for the reader. This is also true if your audience includes people with learning or intellectual disability. When available, provide a plain language summary or abstract that can help to make your dissemination effort accessible to more people. Plain language is communication that is clear, straightforward, and only uses words that are necessary. There are many guidelines on writing a plain language summary. And doing so may benefit many different groups. While accessibility means considering how people with different types of disability will be able to consume your findings. Many accessibility adjustments will benefit everyone in your audience. Increasing your font size or providing closed captioning may allow your words to reach more people in a crowded room regardless of vision or hearing difficulty. Providing a plain language summary, as I just mentioned, will mean that people who aren't used to reading academic journal articles may still be able to get the main points of your findings of your work without reading the whole document. This fits into the larger philosophy of universal design, where the design of products and environments are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design. If you consider accessibility early on in the process, you'll find you're not making adaptations upon request, but rather creating reports and presentations that are easier for everyone to consume. Often, efforts to increase accessibility benefits everyone in your audience. This topical module focused on ways to make your research accessible using several methods. While this is essential for disability researchers, we hope you will consider ways to make your work accessible in any of your communications. Whether it's research on a topic unrelated to disability, emails, or social media posts, you encounter people with disabilities in all aspects of your professional and personal life. And using a universal design approach to your communication will benefit all of your audience. We intend for this to be an introduction rather than a detailed guide and we're providing additional resources on accessibility for you to explore as you move throughout the rest of this training. Accessibility is an ongoing process, one that we ourselves are also constantly learning about. You may find variation and guidelines from different sources. It's important to learn as much about your audience as you can when making design decisions. We attempt to incorporate principles of accessibility into this training, and we hope to improve it in the future. Please do reach out to us to provide feedback on accessibility at our e-mail address, disability. statistics@UNH.edu. Thank you.