

>> Welcome, everyone, and thank you for joining our webinar today. I'm Dr. Melanie Reese, the director of CADRE. On behalf of all of us here at CADRE, we are honored and excited to bring you today's webinar with Carolyn Hayer. This presentation is another in our continuing series of valuable CADRE webinars that we've archived and are available on our website.

I am so honored to introduce someone that CADRE has had the fortune to partner with and get to know. I find Carolyn to be the genuine article, with a deep well of knowledge and experience that she brings to her work, and her leadership. Carolyn's been working in the field of parent and family advocacy for over 25 years. She is currently the senior program director of national and regional projects at SPAN at the National Parent Advocacy Network in New Jersey. As director of the Center for Parent Information and Resources, CPIR, Carolyn and her team work to provide information and products to build capacity to the close to one hundred Parent Centers across the country who assist and serve families with children with disabilities. In her various roles at SPAN, Carolyn's conducted presentations at the local state and national levels on topics related to health and education advocacy, family professional partnerships and family and youth leadership development. She's currently pursuing her master's public administration degree from Rutgers. We asked Carolyn to share this information with all of you after her amazing presentation at our last symposium, and we're so grateful that she's willing to share her time with all of us.

So without further ado, I will turn the time over to Carolyn. And thank you, Carolyn, for joining us.

>> Thank you so much, Melanie. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm really glad to be here with you. I'm excited to be back with my friends and so-called family, also friends and family at CADRE, because we so appreciate the work that CADRE does. And SPAN certainly utilizes so many of CADRE's materials and resources in our work with families, and so we're thrilled to have an opportunity to collaborate once again.

So today, we're going to be speaking about "Navigating the Path Forward: Managing Difficult Conversations." Early today, we were having a little conversation about how challenging and stressful things have been as of late because of the pandemic, and people really having a hard time managing all of the required activities they have to do, both at work, at home, with their family. So oftentimes this gives rise to some difficult conversations that have to be had. So I'm hoping that during our time together today, we'll be able to have a conversation. I don't want to talk at you, I want to talk with you, so I will encourage you to please utilize the Chat to share comments, thoughts, questions and concerns as we go through today's presentation. And I hope you will leave here today with some tools and some strategies to help you as you embark on navigating the difficult conversations that you may encounter during your day today.

So today, I'm going to give you a little bit of information about the CPIR, which is the Center for Parent Information and Resources. Then we're going to talk about why it's important to engage in difficult conversations. And the alternative is, what is the cost of remaining silent and not

engaging in those conversations, and again, hopefully providing some techniques and strategies that you will find useful, and some helpful resources as well.

I will start by sharing some information with you about the CPIR, which is the Center for Parent Information and Resources. We are housed at SPAN in New Jersey, and I'm the director of that project. And the CPIR is the national TA Center for the 96 Parent Centers across the country. And we provide universal technical assistance to support Parent Centers and their work with families. We help them build their capacity, we help them by providing information, resources and connecting them to one another. We have a very robust parent network in this country, and the expertise that lies within the Parent Center Network is unmatched. So it's really critically important that we provide support for one another. Our primary mission is to meet the needs of the Parent Centers, right? So we call ourselves "The Hub," because we are a hub of information, and we provide resources to all the Parent Centers.

I would invite you to visit our website, ParentCenterHub.org, where you will find access to a myriad of information. There's a library of resources there. The first thing you can check out are the 10 great things that you'll find on the CPIR; that's kind of a roadmap that we'll kind of share with you some of the wonderful resources that are available.

In addition to providing universal technical assistance to the Parent Center Network, we work collaboratively hand-in-hand with the four regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers. Our partnership with our PTACs is really the thing that helps us to ensure that the Parent Centers are getting what they need. So I would encourage you, if you are from a Parent Center to make sure that you are connected to your regional PTAC, because they are a font of information, and can really provide support for you.

If you have any questions about the CPIR, who we are or what we do, feel free to post those in the Chat. I see Jeannine has posted the website there, so thank you for doing that, Jeannine, and we'll go ahead and get started.

So first, I'd like to pose a question to all of you. And please use the Chat to let us know, what's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear this phrase: "We need to talk." Thank you, Monica, who says, "What did I do wrong," which is generally my start as well. "Uh-oh, there's a big problem." "Disagreement." Thank you, Ruth, that is true. And there's someone saying there's some concerns -- uh-oh, there's a difficult conversation. "Here it comes." "Conflict." I see that question came up a couple of times. I know if you have not checked out CADRE's resources on navigating and managing conflict, I would encourage you to do so. "Something's not going well." "There's something serious going on." So what's interesting -- "Negativity." Great term.

What's interesting to me is that all of those phrases, those things that people say come to mind when they hear that phrase, "We need to talk," are all negative, right? Someone says "Anxiety" -- thanks, Christine. And that is true. We right away think -- no one ever thinks "we need to talk" means, oh, something good is going to come after that, right? We generally think, uh-oh,

there's a problem. Thanks, Melissa -- a learning opportunity -- because that is part of it. It is a learning opportunity. I'm going to talk more about that today. So thank you all for being so proactive and sharing your thoughts, but yes, it's generally a concern when you hear, "we need to talk," right?

So I love sharing this. In the graphic, there's a picture that says -- the mom says to her son, "We have to talk about your grades after you're done watering the lawn." And then in the picture, he is watering the lawn for such a long time that the water is almost up to his waist. So my first thought, is this you, when someone says, "we need to talk," because what is that demonstrating? Avoidance. We want to avoid that conversation when we can. And that is problematic, because that's not going to help resolve the situation. But if you're not trying to avoid it, you may be this person, who is actually at the meeting, but certainly not thrilled about being there. And in this graphic, we have a person who's present at a meeting, but she's leaned back and she's totally checked out, and not really engaged in the conversation. So most of us tend to either avoid the conversation, or even if we participate in the conversation, we're not really there. We're kind of checked out, and don't really want to be part of it. And neither of those are the things that we want to do.

But the question is, why? Why do we want to run away from these difficult conversations? And here's a graphic of a young man, biting his nails, who's clearly not very happy about having to engage. And the reason why we don't want to be part of these difficult conversations is because they're hard, right? And we're discussing things that really matter most to us. For example, if we're talking about an IEP meeting, we're talking about our kids, and our kids' future. And so those are difficult conversations that people tend to shy away from, because they're afraid of the outcome. But the important thing to note is, shying away from it does not solve the problem, and tends to actually make things worse.

There was a study done in the U.K. where the answer to that question about, why do we shy away from difficult conversations -- 66 percent of the folks said that they feel stressed or anxious if they know that a difficult conversation is coming up. Similar to what many of us said in response to the question, or how you feel when you hear, "We need to talk." Fifty-seven percent of the respondents said that they would do almost anything to avoid having a difficult conversation. And 52 percent of the respondents said that they actually prefer -- actually prefer -- to put up with a negative situation, rather than tackle it and have a conversation to resolve it. I think that that's probably true with many of the families that we work with who are not happy with what's going on at school, but may, in fact, not address the situation, and just kind of let things go. That's problematic because the child is not getting the services that they need. But the other reason that that's problematic is, people are kind of building up steam while that's happening, right? they're getting angrier and angrier, and at some point they're going to blow. So it's better to kind of address those things as early as possible, and the resolution will be easier if we start sooner rather than later. And we counsel families to try to resolve those disputes early on, because if you wait and you're ending up in a due process situation, it's just

much more difficult on every level. And it takes so much more to get to a resolution. And generally it's not one that everyone buys into.

So this is why we need to have this conversation about learning to manage these challenging discussions. When we avoid -- and this is a quote from Peter Bromberg -- "When we avoid difficult conversations, we trade short-term discomfort for long-term dysfunction." Right? So rather than be uncomfortable in the short-term, we're going to just drag it out and drag it out, and things are getting worse and worse and worse. And why do we do that? Because when we are uncomfortable, it's awkward. People may have some guilt associated with that, so they just feel, "Let me not have this conversation." But in reality, the dysfunction, that silence, is really bringing resentment. And that is going to be another hurdle that we have to try to get over.

So I don't know about you, I am the queen of procrastination, so I am certainly a person who will avoid a difficult conversation if I can, because I often think, well, maybe the situation will resolve itself. It rarely does. Just doing nothing is not generally going to improve. But most people want to avoid conflict, and they think that avoiding the difficult conversation's going to do that, but it really doesn't. And it's better to learn to navigate these conversations, and not try to avoid them.

Jennifer has put an interesting comment in the Chat, that she lives in a small town, and she tries not to cause conflict, because now everyone probably then becomes embroiled or involved in that conflict, when you have a small town. And also, the issue of people then might need to feel that they need to choose sides, right? And we don't want it to get to that point, because it's not about choosing sides. It is about resolving whatever the issue is. And even though it may be difficult to have that conversation, that's the only way it's going to reach resolution. Even avoiding it, it just grows and grows, and now more and more people are involved. So also, if you try to resolve the issue earlier and sooner, when it's just those primary parties that are involved, the rest of the town doesn't have to be involved, doesn't have to know about it. It doesn't have to get to that level.

So when are conversations the most difficult? Generally speaking, it's when the topic is one that is an emotional one. Again, we are talking about our children -- and how emotional can it be? Or friendships, relationships. Conflict with family members -- again, we're going to try to avoid so that we don't extend the conflict, not realizing that that's really -- communication is what will resolve conflict. These conversations are often difficult when they involve issues that are extremely important to us -- our children's education. Think about work. I know right now we're all having difficult conversations. The pandemic has increased everyone's anxiety. It has caused us to have to make some difficult decisions. I know many Parent Centers right now are struggling with maintaining their workforce, maintaining their office. How do you ensure that people can come back together and be safe?

And so many things feel like they are outside of our control. And so it's difficult decisions that have to be made. And we have to recognize that other people have extenuating circumstances, so it can't -- it's not just the One Size Fits All. So we have to have conversations with people to

identify, what do they need? What is it that's going to make them feel safe? What do we need to put into place? Can we afford to do that? Those are the kinds of things that we have to think about. But again, what's important to us? Maintaining the safety of our staff, making sure people have what they need to get their job done. Trying to alleviate as much stress and anxiety as we can while still getting the work done. So everyone is really struggling. Families are struggling more than they ever have in the past as well. And we're trying to find ways that we could support our center staff who are struggling themselves, but are still supporting families with their challenges as well. I think the next bullet point, outcomes are uncertain -- this is where we're all living right now. No one knows what is happening from day to day, you turn on the news and you just have to try to take information and use it to make the best decisions that you can. But again, uncertainty breeds really uncomfortableness, and that pressure to try to avoid. But we can't. We're forced, right? So we have to have these conversations.

Another one that is experienced particularly by families is, when there's a power imbalance. So often times, families may feel that they don't have -- they're not on a level playing field. They don't have the power to have an even conversation when it's a difficult conversation. So it's not just families at IEP meetings. Think about people in their jobs. People are struggling financially. Difficult conversation could be, you have to ask your boss for a raise, or you need to ask for time off, or you need to ask for some additional support with your job duties. These are all challenging conversations, but they must be had because ignoring or avoiding them only makes the situation worse. But we recognize all of these issues, and we're going to talk about them more as we think about some strategies that we can use. And then, of course, when the stakes are high, whether it's health, safety, our children's future, our family's future -- those are, again, things that make the conversations more difficult. So anything that's related to our home, our work, our family and the relationships with those closest to us, those are the critical conversations that we really need to figure out how to have them.

So I wanted to share with you, as we think about, how do we have some of these crucial conversations? And at the bottom, you will see some information, there's a book called "Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High." And I would encourage you to take a look at that. It's got some great information. But this graphic is from that book. You can see it's a triangle that has these three kind of pieces to what's part of these crucial conversations. So generally, the conversation is going to be a difficult one when there are opposing opinions, right? If everybody was in agreement, we wouldn't have any sort of a conflict, we wouldn't have to have the difficult conversations. Again -- strong emotions, things that are really, really important to us make the conversation more difficult. Then high stakes -- what's going to happen, or what's the outcome if we don't have this conversation? Is something negative going to happen? Is my child going to be harmed? Is my family going to suffer? So these are the three critical components of crucial conversations. So the definition that they give of a crucial conversation is, it's a discussion between two or more people that hold opposing opinions about a high stakes issue. And it's an emotionally-charged conversation, so emotions are running strong. So is there some potential loss? Where is the struggle? Sometimes the struggle

is, people know what they need, they know what they want, but they don't have the communication tools to be able to share that with the other person.

So some things to start to think about when you're having crucial conversations are, what happened? What should have happened? And be able to clearly convey that, is the starting point. I think sometimes we enter into difficult conversations focused on the outcome, and we really have to start with, what is it that triggered this? What happened or did not happen? And how do you feel about that, right, because feelings, the emotions is a critical piece. Then, of course, how do we start to have a conversation about resolving it? But you can't talk about resolution if both sides are not on the same page about what did or did not happen. So folks have to think about honing their communication skills to be able to clearly communicate. When you're entering this difficult conversation, what is it that happened? Or what should have happened? So, for example, we're at that IEP meeting. Oftentimes families are struggling to communicate what it is that they expected their child to be learning or doing, and saying, well, what has happened is that they're not learning or doing that. I think the other thing that the pandemic has done is, parents are more engaged than they have ever been in their children's education. They're the teachers, so they're seeing first-hand. And we've heard from families on both ends of the spectrum; families who say, wow, my child is doing a lot more in school than I thought they were doing. Or conversely, wow, my child is not performing the way that I thought they were. But now that I'm seeing them on a day-to-day basis, what they're working on, I realize that there's some more skills that I would want them to develop.

So when they're going into that IEP meeting to have that conversation, the first thing they're going to say is to share, this is where we are. What has happened, or what didn't happen? Then we can talk about what services, et cetera, might need to be delivered to the child to address that issue that the family is bringing forth.

So let's kind of talk about, how do we do this, right? Where do we begin? We're going to start with Step 1, which is that Inquire. And it depends on which end of the conversation you're in. So if you are the person that has an issue that needs to engage in a difficult conversation with someone else, then you want to be able to communicate what your concerns are. If you're the person that someone is coming to who needs some resolution for a problem that they're having, the first thing you want to do is to enquire, what is the situation? What is happening? We call it, have some discovery, right? Think about, what is it that has happened? What's the situation? What did or didn't happen? And get some clarity around that, and spend as much time as necessary to do that. Let's not just jump to solving the problem, let's be clear on what the problem is. So once you have clearly identified the problem and asked the questions that you need to ask to make sure you clearly understand the problem, then let's acknowledge whether or not this is true, right? So you're going to observe what you can about the situation, and try to really understand what the person is trying to say to you. And this this truly an issue? And you want to acknowledge that you understand what is being brought to you. And conversely, if you're going to someone to get some resolution, you want to do whatever you

can to clearly convey to them what the issue is, make sure they understand. And that means you may need to ask them questions to make sure they're really understanding the situation that you're bringing back to them. Some ways that you can confirm that you're understanding what people have said to you, you can repeat. "I hear you saying this. Am I on the right track?" Try not to be defensive in your questions, but try to just make sure you're understanding what the situation is. Again, nothing about how to solve the problem, knowing exactly what the problem is.

Then after you acknowledge the problem, then we're going to go to Step 3 where we're going to start to advocate and think about, what's the solution to the problem, right? You want to see what has been the impact? What has the situation caused to happen? How do we stop that from happening immediately? Then how do we then start to problem solve to make sure that it doesn't recur or happen again? So you want to share your understanding, and then start -- the problem solving piece is really about having a conversation. And you do that by asking some open-ended questions. So just like we often hear the refrain, right, "nothing about us without us" -- if you really want to problem solve, you have to talk to the person that is having the problem, right? So whether you're the person presenting the problem or the person that's trying to solve the problem, communication is key. Don't try to solve someone's problem based on what you would want to happen. First find out what it is that they need. What are they seeking? What would be the solution that would work best for them? And really, have a brainstorming -- don't get in your head, well, here's the solution that I think, and not be open to listening to what the other person has to say.

Sometimes this can get adversarial, because as you start to think about what the solution is that you would want to see, we sometimes have a hard time, then, being receptive to a different solution. But again, recognizing that it's not a resolution if it doesn't work for the person that is seeking some way to resolve the conflict, right? So it can't just be a one-way street. And if you're asking for support or asking for someone to address the problem, be prepared to offer some solutions. Don't just say, "Here's a problem," and not be willing to do a little bit of work to help resolve the problem. And sometimes that's asking questions from your side. So for example, a common problem is, a student may not be receiving all of the therapies that they need, right? We know that there's a teacher shortage. We know that there are speech therapist shortages, right? It's not just to go in and say, we're not getting the speech that we're entitled to, because that is a valid problem. But then have some conversations about, well, how do we resolve that? Is there another speech therapist available? Can we come before school? Can we come after school? Can we contract outside of the school district for that speech therapy? Then tap into your network. But it can't just be, "We're not getting all of our speech therapy," and end the conversation there. It's really about broadening the scope. Can we have some shared services? Can we make this up at another time? So we're recognizing there's a problem. We're advocating for a solution, and it needs to be outside of the box, right? But what's not okay is to say, "Well, we're not getting the speech we're supposed to have." "I'm sorry, we're short speech therapists," and that's the end of the conversation. No. It has to continue. And it needs

to be, where else can we find this service? So we really need to brainstorm and not dig our heels in.

So preparation is really the key to having success when we're navigating difficult conversations. So there's the Four D's of difficult conversations. The first one is Denial, right? That's sometimes what we're confronted with on both sides. I may have a problem, but I may deny it. Or, I recognize my problem, I go to someone to help me resolve it, and as I engage in this conversation, they're in denial that the problem exists. So we already talked about, what is the situation? How do we clarify what did or didn't happen? If someone is in denial about whatever you're trying to clarify, that's the first point, where you have to try to get on the same page, right? And that is best done by just identifying the facts, right? Try to take the feelings out of it, take the emotions out of it, and back to our speech example -- facts are facts, they either did or did not get the therapy that was called for in their IEP. So that's actually indisputable. But what tends to happen is, it's emotional for families. They're concerned when their child is not getting their speech therapy services. They're thinking about long-term impact; if they don't get these services, what's the implication? They'll fall further and further behind, and then we're emotionally-charged, and that's how we're coming to the conversation, versus very clear, state the facts. We're supposed to get speech three times a week, we've been getting it once a week for the past 12 weeks. How are we going to make up these 24 sessions? Just start there. Not easy. Sounds easy, but it's not easy when you're in the moment. So let's try to first address the facts. And that's how we're going to get around that first D of the difficult conversation, of denial.

Then the second D is Deflection. If anyone's ever been in a difficult conversation, you know, many times you go to someone with an issue, and the response that you get is, someone just goes 0 to 60 immediately -- "Why are you telling me this? I don't want to hear this. I can't help you. No one else has this problem" -- off on an emotional tangent, right? And they're deflecting, right? They're no longer talking about the speech therapy, now we're talking about all of these other issues. Or you hear, "There's a speech shortage. We've tried. We've done this, we've done that, we put ads in the paper. We stood on the street corner and waved at people, and then whatever, we go to find speech therapy" -- which could all be true. But the fact still remains that the child has not gotten the services that they're supposed to get. So all of that may be true, but it's totally irrelevant to resolving the issue. So we still have the problem. So try to remain focused on that situation that you came with, with the factual information, and just redirect back to that no matter how the other person tries to take the conversation into a different direction. Stay the course, basically.

Then the third D of the difficult conversation is Disruption. So that's the person that just explodes, right? "Can't believe you're coming to me. I've worked so hard to help your child. I've done everything in my power to address this problem." And you have to try to remain calm and not engage because human nature is your first response, is to kind of respond in the way you're being treated. So you have to really consciously try to remain calm. Don't engage in that same

type of behavior. And also, just -- no, I'm sorry, we're on the same slide -- so no matter what the other person does, whether they're shouting, they're screaming, crying, storming out of the room, you still remain calm and focused. And when you can get to speak to them again, you go right back to what that situation is. We have not reached -- we're short 24 speech sessions.

Then the last D of the four Ds of difficult conversation is, Dumping, where, the other person just wants to dump on you and say, "All right, this whole thing is your fault, there's nothing else that I can do about it -- again, try not to take it personally. Start to then talk about, well, here are some potential things you can do about it, and try to engage the person around the facts. So you do that best by being prepared and coming to the table with the facts, the potential solutions, and remaining calm, and not getting emotional.

So as we think about how to do that, there's some questions that you should be asking yourself, right? You start off by thinking, as I'm preparing to have this difficult conversation, what is it that is needed, right? Do I really need to have this conversation? What's going to happen if I don't? Often times there's a negative outcome. So that's telling you that you really do need to go ahead and have that conversation. And if you're okay with just leaving things as they are, then you don't need to have this conversation. But as we said earlier, that's probably not the best way to move forward, right, even though most of us would be more comfortable keeping things as they are than engaging in the conversation. But if the situation is one you can't really tolerate anymore, then it is a needed conversation. What are my concerns, right? You need to be able to come with the information that you need. Also think about the setting where you're going to have this conversation, the timing of the conversation. Try to do it when you're not stressed, you're not rushed, that the other person is not doing 10 different things, and that they can really engage with you and be focused on you and the information that you're bringing forth to them. And particularly now, where everything is happening in a remote, virtual world, difficult conversations are best had in person, if possible. Not always possible, but if so, I would encourage that. There's so much non-verbal communication that happens that we just don't capture in a virtual or a remote conversation, that you're likely to have a better outcome when you can be in a room, see the person's body language, see how they respond to you. All those non-verbal communication cues.

Sometimes you might think you want to bring someone else with you to the conversation, as we always encourage families when they're going to that IEP meeting. Bring someone with you who can be in the moment, is not going to react emotionally and who can really also hear what the other person is saying, clarify points if necessary. Always be willing to kind of share what it is that you're trying to get to, right? Not just the resolution, but why -- why are you seeking that resolution? What's that emotional pull? And get that person on board. One of the things that I often say when we're working with school districts -- we don't always know, or families as parents, they don't always know what to ask for when they go to the district. They don't know all of the resources that are available. So they may not have the specific asks. Part of the communication needs to be to get the other person to understand why you're seeking this

particular service, support or resolution. Then they may be privy to information that you're not aware of, where they can say, "Oh, okay, well, if that's what you're looking for, we can offer X, Y, or Z." So often times we're in there, back with the same example of speech. How are we going to fit three sessions of speech? Maybe that's not an option. The speech therapist's schedule is full, calendar is full, doesn't have another block of time during the day. Well, it doesn't have to be during the day. It could be after school, before school, weekends -- that's when we can start to think about and brainstorm other ways to resolve the problem.

And then also think about what you can bring to the table to assist in the resolution. Also note that it doesn't have to be forever. So if making up those 24 sessions means over the summer that child is going to get three weeks or four weeks of speech, that's how they're going to make it up. Figure how you can make that happen. But don't just say we can just not do it, or we only have to do it within the confines of the school day.

I see Maryanne has posted a comment -- I find that when meetings are rushed, it elevates the anxiety of participants. Anxiety causes the brain to go into self-preservation mode, so fight, flight or freeze response begins to kick in -- absolutely. So we have to really be conscious of that and not let it take over, and do some deep breathing exercises, make notes for ourselves if we have to, to keep ourselves on track. I used to go into IEP meetings with a little postcard, I had my big pile of notes, but I also had a little postcard that I would just have my three, sometimes two, depending on what they were -- but my non-negotiables -- like, I can't leave this meeting without these three things. Often the conversation was all over the place, but that would help me to refocus, even when being anxious, or feeling like this isn't going the way I want it to go, I could just look back at that card, and it would redirect me and get me back on the path, because there's so many things that our kids need, right? You have to prioritize and figure out, what's the thing that we need right now?

And I'll never forget, one year it was all about tying shoes for us. And I'm an IEP meeting, and they're talking about reading, writing, and arithmetic, and I kept saying, "He's got to learn how to tie his shoes." That's the most important thing in our life. It was becoming -- he was getting older, it was becoming difficult for the whole family. Even though they kind of looked at me, like, "Wow, that's your big deal?" And it was at the time, they listened to that, and what, again, the other person coming up with solutions that I never would have thought of. The plan we made was that everyone throughout the day, all of his teachers, would help him, because he just needed more practice. And he was getting OT, but it wasn't enough to help him really develop that skill. So when he went to art, and he went to gym, and he went to music, all of those teachers would say, "Hey, come on over. Untie and tie your shoes." "Untie and tie your shoes." So all throughout the day he was practicing, practicing, practicing that skill.

And then a few months later, I got a call one day, when you get the call from the school, you get a little panicked, what's going on? And it was a good call. It's that, "Yay! He did it today all by himself!" And we all kind of share in that. So it was kind of an out-of-the-box thing, didn't cost any money. But we all were able to kind of utilize what we could bring in little increments that

made a big difference for him. So again, it was a little bit of a difficult conversation, because I went there thinking, on my postcard this is my top priority. And initially, no one else really thought that was a big deal. So it took some conversation to get to.

In the Chat, Maryanne is saying, "Just slowing down the conversation is extremely helpful." Absolutely. Slow the pace down. Take a break. That's another strategy that we often don't utilize enough. Stop and say, "This is kind of getting a little bit heated. Why don't we take a break and reconvene in an hour," or another day, or in another week. But when you feel things getting out of control and you're no longer able yourself to feel you're able to remain in control, take a break. Reconvene. That's another strategy we can use with schools, because reconvening another meeting is not an easy task, right? So sometimes the threat of reconvening a meeting might be the thing that helps to push us to the finish line and reach some sort of resolution.

As we are having these conversations, look for places where we do have agreement, and document that. Write it down. Following the meeting, we're going to share that with everybody, make sure everyone's on the same page, so that there's no questions later or misunderstandings later. And just be firm. You don't have to be rude to be firm, right? You don't have to be aggressive to be assertive. But you want to do those things, and not give up what it is that you're seeking to get that resolution. Because when we do, that's when we want to avoid the difficult conversation because it hasn't worked for us. We had it, and I didn't get what I needed. I'm not going to do that again. Kind of just keep your wits about you, but stick to it. Don't give up, and come back to the table, if necessary.

Stephanie has shared that, "My husband calls for a break when we're having a disagreement. The first time it happened, I thought he was crazy, but it really helps." I'm going to take that advice, but yes, it's just kind of step away, is often good for everyone involved. Gives you a fresh perspective. You can come back, because the other challenge we have in our communication is, we're so busy trying to get to what it is that we want, that we're often not hearing what the other person is saying. And I think that taking that break, or calling for a break allows us to do that, to step away and kind of think about what the other person has said to us. Process it, and not be just trying to respond so quickly in the moment. I just want to move to the next slide, where we're going to have here some tips around managing these conversations. Again, I've cited at the bottom another great book, it's called "Choosing Courage: The Everyday Guide to Being Brave at Work." But many of the strategies that are listed, they're not just about the workplace; we can use them across all domains of our life.

And so thinking about, how do we balance the positive with the negative -- don't always go in and talk about the negative, negative, negative. Look for and speak to the positive things that are happening. Don't make it personal -- and that's really hard to do, but try to keep focused on what the issue is. Identify ongoing supports, again, looking for other people that can kind of come in and help for that resolution. And I think the big one is, listen more than you speak -- which is hard, because you're going in to get something done that you want something to

happen, so you feel you have to communicate your needs. But also it's really important to listen and process what the other person is saying.

I think another one is, sometimes when we're engaging in a difficult conversation, we've thought about and processed and hashed this issue over in our heads for a very long time. But don't assume that your position is going to be obvious to the other person. You need to explain and give some context to the other person, not just assume that everybody -- why can't they see this? It's so obvious to me. And own your own feelings, and don't make the other person responsible for that. Those are some of the don'ts. Some of the dos -- be as clear and concise as possible. Don't tell the whole story, just give the pertinent information. Be honest, because you're trying to also build trust. So you have to be honest and bring that to the table so that the other person can reciprocate the same way.

Be aware of, and cognizant of, the other person's feelings, just like you're keeping your own feelings in check, try to see the situation from their perspective. Lesson learned for me early on was that, particularly around the IEP team, my initial thoughts were, these people just don't want to do the right thing for my kid, right? That was my emotional baggage. But the reality was, I learned they often didn't know what needed to be done. So part of that process for me was sharing information and educating them about what it was that I was basing my opinions on and my requests on. And I didn't realize that at first, I just assumed they knew that because they were professionals. But they didn't know everything that I had read after poring over books and magazine articles and the internet, to find out everything I could find out about my child's disability.

I see some comments in the Chat. Maryanne is saying, "I believe Steve Covey is the one who wrote "Seek First to Understand Before Being Understood" -- absolutely. I apologize, I'm having a little problem with my mouse here -- thank you, Dee. Yes, we will share the recording, I believe. I'm going to leave that up to CADRE to respond, but I do believe we're going to.

And here's, I believe, a question. "I've requested compensatory education due to an inadequately designed and implemented IEP. The school is meeting with me to discuss this next week, but has been advised by their attorneys that this is not an IEP team meeting, and doesn't follow those rules. How can I best prepare myself for a contentious meeting that has no rules/expectations? I cannot afford an attorney." That is a fantastic question, Dawn. So the first thing is, you do want to clarify, if they're saying it's not an IEP meeting, what is it? Because IEP meetings, there are rules. There's things that have to happen, there are timelines. There's prior written notice. There are rules about what needs to happen in an IEP meeting. I'm not sure, if there's a discussion about your child's program, placement or services, then it's an IEP meeting. Here's a time to ask the question, "I perceive this as an IEP meeting because we're going to be discussing program and-or services, so if it's not an IEP meeting, what is it?" And let them define that for you, because I can't imagine what it is if it's not an IEP meeting. But if they've already told you it's not an IEP meeting, let them clarify for you what it is.

Another thing that you can do when you're in the meeting is be comfortable with the uncomfortable silence, which is that thing that happens when you ask a question, and no one is too quick to respond. And we often want to fill that void -- pinch yourself, sit on your hands, whatever you have to do. But if you ask a question like, "If this is not an IEP meeting, what is it?" Just don't say anything until someone answers that question for you. That is a very good tactic to use when you're involved in a meeting, and you're not really sure why someone is saying something, or offering something, or denying something -- ask that question, and just wait. It can be very uncomfortable. But prepare yourself and just sit, and wait for someone to give you an answer to your question. Once they give it to you, you say, "Can I have that in writing," right, because it's all about documenting the conversation. It sounds like it's going to be a difficult conversation. I'm glad you're preparing yourself. There's lots of information about compensatory education, because of what has been going on with the pandemic. I'm not sure what state you're in, but you might want to do some research and find out what's on the books in your state around comp ed. But again, that's a valid question, where you come with the facts, make sure you have the information about what services need to be compensated -- what did your child miss? Be as detailed as you can. Dates, services, whatever you can. Write it down on a piece of paper so that you have a starting point. You're coming to that meeting to say, "These are the services that we missed, and let's have a conversation about compensatory ed." You may not resolve it in this one meeting, because that's a big issue, depending on how many services were missed. That's okay, right? Just be prepared. State the facts -- that's the situation. Get everyone on board, and then you can start talking about the resolution, and be prepared to have some suggestions about how you think -- what the compensatory ed should look like. Take on one problem at a time, right? If they're just denying without even having that conversation, get something in writing, and then you can use your procedural safeguards to go to the next level if you have to do that. I hope that was helpful to Dawn.

Great, okay, so I'm going to move us along. So here's some sample phrases, because it's often difficult to -- my computer has a mind of its own today, I apologize. Okay, some sample phrases that you can use. You reword these to what's comfortable for you, but you've got to figure out ways to -- we talked earlier about mirroring, right? When someone says something, you want to clarify. "Let me see if I understand what you're saying." "Here's what I thought I heard you say. Is that accurate?" You want to get that confirmation from the other person -- again, clarity on what the situation is. What happened or what did not happen? Then where you can, you're going to validate where you're in agreement. "I agree with what you're saying" -- that goes a long way, particularly when there's a lot of disagreement. You want to acknowledge that when you can. And if someone is saying something that you agree with, "Oh, your comments make sense to me. Thank you for sharing that." If they don't make sense to you, ask the question. Questions are the number one way to resolve issues, right? Sometimes you don't agree, so you want to kind of couch it and say, "I can see how you would feel that way. But let me tell you" -- and give some more information to try to clarify the situation.

And empathy is important as well. You're not always going to agree. But again, you don't have to be disagreeable when you disagree. "I can imagine you might be feeling this way, but here's why this is or is not happening." Then always be kind of checking in to see if you have the buy-in, right? See if everybody is on the same page. How are you feeling about this decision? Don't walk away if you're not in agreement, and not saying that you're not in agreement. I think it's important that we use the time when we're having these conversations to capture where we agree, where we don't -- because then we know what the next step is. Then asking people for some input -- how would we approach this if they're not in agreement? You're not in agreement with the decision, how would you solve the problem? What other things can we do?

So some other techniques and strategies -- and I think we talked about this a little bit -- use clear, concise language. As much as you possibly can, be positive and proactive, and keep your emotions in check -- easier said than done. Always come prepared. Some prepared with the facts, come prepared with some data, come prepared with some options that you think would resolve the issue. And bring some proposals -- another good strategy to use when you're trying to reach some sort of consensus or resolve an issue is to say, how about we try this for a discrete amount of time? Sometimes the issue is, people can't see doing this forever. So how about we say we do this for six weeks, let's come back to the table, see where we are, see where things went well, where things didn't go so well, and see where we need to readjust. Sometimes we just need to say, we don't know what the resolution is. We don't know how to solve this problem. Let's try this, and let's be willing to try something, review it, and change it if it's necessary. Try to build in that flexibility and be open to new ideas. So be willing to propose new ideas, but be open to listening to other people's different ideas. Change is very difficult for people to accept. And so thinking out-of-the-box sounds great, until we say, let's actually do that. And then it's, like, oh well, we've never done that before. But that's okay. This is a learning opportunity, and let's use it as such.

I'm just going to take a little look at the Chat -- "Take on one problem at a time." Yes, that's good advice that someone gave to me, so I'm passing that along, because sometimes just you're overwhelmed with having too much going on. Plus, if you take on one thing at a time, you can resolve that, then everyone is more likely to come back together and move on to see what else we could work on together.

Here's a question: "If a child has ADHD and the school decided to cut his math instruction from 90 minutes to 30 minutes, because his attention span is only 15 minutes, according to them, how can I have them increase the time again?" So Rosie, this is a great question, because it's actually very clear. He was already receiving instruction for 90 minutes, and they want to cut. The first question is, what are they basing that information on? Is it subjective, that someone thinks his attention span is only 15 minutes? Or was there some evaluation, or some true data that says that that's true? So that would be the starting point for me. Maybe we give that another evaluation, because if you're not in agreement, and I'm assuming you're not, because you said "according to them," that his attention span is only 15 minutes, so maybe then we

need to look at what instructional tools and strategies are we using? Maybe what we're using is only holding his attention for 15 minutes. Maybe we need to look at some other things that are more engaging for him. This is where, I think, parents are fantastic in terms of sharing the information -- you know what's going on at home. You see him doing certain things where he's there for an hour, totally engaged. Sharing some of those tips is also helpful. Is he more likely to be engaged before lunch or after lunch? Does he need to run around and let off some steam, and then is he able to kind of redirect and focus and pay attention? All of that is important information that should be part of the conversation, before we start talking about decreasing services. Have we tried all of these things? And again, if that's their proposal, it needs to be given to you in writing, and it needs to be based on some rationale. So at the very least, that's your starting point -- asking for that. It may be an uncomfortable question, but we're going to ask the question, why are you doing this? What are you basing it on? Then you have time to review that information before you have to answer and figure out what's your next step.

Then Cindy's sharing, "If they're having issues with attention over time, then it sounds like he needs shorter sessions over more time." That's another great -- if it's true, right? If it's only 15 minutes, so we're not going to decrease. He should still get his 30 or 90 minutes, but maybe not at all at once. Maybe it needs to be two or three sessions to reach that time.

The question should not be what does he need, not what does he tolerate? The question should be, what does he need, not what does he tolerate? Needs drive goals and services -- absolutely. Thank you, Suzanne. That's absolutely true. Again, it's a conversation. Everybody bringing to the table their knowledge and perspective and expertise to figure out which of these things would work best for this student. I love all the great responses -- "ask them to define what 'inattention' means." What are they calling "inattention," right? Thank you. That's a great point, Mary. If math is a non-preferred activity, perhaps three 30-minute sessions would work better than trying to cram it all in in 90 minutes. I've seen lots of kids on the ground doing work. So again, this is be open to new ideas, new conversations. Nothing should be off the table, and just document, document, document. It's a great question. Thank you so much.

I'm having a really hard time with my PowerPoint here. So here's some things to avoid. These are the big don'ts -- don't assume. We know what that acronym could stand for. Don't blame, don't judge and don't be overly dramatic, right? Just, again, convey the facts. Have backup data. Brainstorm, communicate, get everybody on board, and just if you're raising your voice, that probably means you need a break. Everybody might need a break, and recognize that. And here's some of the dos, right? Do listen to what the other person is saying. Not just listen, but process. Listen to see where there's some commonalities with what you are thinking. And as you're preparing for your meeting and your problem solving, do some role playing if you have to. Take breaks -- we already talked about that. And one we haven't talked about, but I've heard this phrase quite a bit since the pandemic -- extend grace. I think we all need to find ways to extend grace to the other person, recognize we're all stressed out. That doesn't mean we don't advocate for our children. That doesn't mean we just accept the status quo. That just

means to be respectful and patient, as we work through these challenges. It doesn't mean just say, I'm going to avoid everything. So I just want to be clear on that.

And Cindy also has said in the Chat, "You can teach some math concepts with Pokemon cards. Be open to different ways to achieve the goals." Absolutely. And take cues from our kids. So if you have a young person who's very interested in Pokemon, that might be the thing that will hold their attention for 30 minutes, 90 minutes, or whatever.

And so as I close, and then we're going to open for questions and comments, I just wanted to share this, "Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters." And that, to me, is really what we've been talking about today. So it's not that they're difficult conversations or challenging conversations, it's that they're conversations that matter. Be brave enough to start those conversations and navigate your way through them, no matter how long it takes. But I would invite you to do that, because it's worth it. It's worth it in the end to make sure that our kids are getting what they need, that our friends, family, staff, colleagues -- whoever it is that you're navigating difficult conversations with, that they're getting the outcomes that you know are going to be beneficial to them.

And so I'm going to, at this point in time, so that I can stop moving these slides that don't like me today -- open this up for questions and comments. I appreciate all the comments that folks have put in the Chat. And I encourage you to ask questions. Share your thoughts or comments. I love when we share our expertise with each other. Saw some great suggestions on how we can help one another. So I appreciate everyone for their thoughts there.

So did we have any other comments, questions? Is this something that you all see yourselves doing, having those conversations? I guess my better question is, is anyone thinking about a difficult conversation that they were going to NOT have, but maybe now they're thinking that they will have that difficult conversation? We'd love to hear your feedback. Very quiet. I hope that means that you're all thinking about the difficult conversations that you're going to have, and that you're not going to avoid them, because I do think you need to be a little bit brave and put yourself out there to start some of these conversations.

Okay, I'm seeing some comments. "Thanks for your presentation. Could you briefly explain about inquiries, since I came late a bit?" Sure, absolutely. So the inquiry part is very important, because you need to start with the facts, right? So what's the situation, what is it that we're dealing with? Inquiry really addresses making sure that you understand, or the other person understands what the issue is, what you're trying to get to. We're here at Point A, we're trying to get to Point B. What is Point B? So how do we navigate a path there? And inquiry is about asking questions; it's about clarifying and making sure everybody understands and is on the same page, around what the issue is. It's also getting some information and clarity around, what are the resources or the potential information or supports that are available to address the problem, right? We have to work within those confines, right? There's only so many hours in a day. There's only so much that we can do. But maybe we can spend that time differently. And I think the example that was given about the decreasing the service from 90 minutes to 15

minutes, or 30 minutes, whatever it was because of the attention span -- that's not the solution, that we're going to decrease the services. Let's figure out a different way to deliver the 90 minutes of service -- breaking it up, changing our methodology -- whatever. So the inquiry is the piece that gets us back to the conversation about, the solution is not to decrease the service, the solution is to change how we deliver it. I often say this around the inclusion discussion, right? Oftentimes we spend a lot of time in IEP meetings having conversations about whether or not the student should be included, when I always want to say, "Let's start with, yes, they will be included. Let's spend this hour and a half meeting talking about how we're going to do it." And those are two different things, right? They're two different conversations. So the inquiry is the piece that gets us to figuring out how we're going to do it, not whether or not we should do it. I hope that is helpful.

"Thanks for the reminders on how to advocate without losing your cool." Easier said than done, but -- and I have to say I was in a meeting once that I literally could feel my blood boil -- and I just stood up and said, "Okay, we have to have another meeting." I just knew I could not keep my composure in that meeting, and it had just gotten to that point. So know your triggers. Know when you're starting to feel that way, and get yourself out of that situation and remain cool. And come back with cooler, clearer heads.

Teisha -- I hope I said that correctly -- says, "I think difficult conversations will always be difficult to start, but having the tools to prepare for them is extremely helpful." I totally agree, awesome. Thank you. I hope you all will take and share this information. Families really struggle with these difficult conversations, and so do we, as we try to help them, absolutely. I think the question, that, to me is, I think, the best information we can give to families, which is, don't hesitate to ask questions. Oftentimes they could bring a lot to the conversation, but they don't have enough information. And we all know that we sometimes, as family members, feel that the experts or professionals may know better than we do. So let's stop thinking that. And I had a woman once say to me, you know, all the people at the table have letters after their name, and I said, "Yes, so do you. M-O-M, D-A-D. You need letters, put some letters after your name. But we bring a very high level of expertise. No one knows our children as well as we do. Very happy to be here and share with you, Monica.

Let's see. Oh great, thank you so much, Kimberly. I hope you all will take some of these to heart, and share with us some of the strategies that you all, as well, are using. "I'm a mediator taking this session, and I find that much of the information would be helpful to Special Ed directors and staff -- not just parents." I so agree with you, Susan. The mediator can also use some of the techniques with both parties. Totally agree. And I had a friend who was a mediator, and she once said to me that she knew that she had done her job successfully when no one left happy, that each -- both sides kind of had to give up something to get to the resolution. And she felt that if somebody left extremely happy and someone left totally despondent, that she had not really done her job, that it wasn't a balance. I found that an interesting comment for a

mediator to make. So thank you for sharing your comments, and I agree with you. Yes, this is for everybody. And not just in schools, right? We can use this through all domains of our life.

And Noella has posted the link to the survey, so please, please, please take a moment to click on that link and fill out the evaluation. Mary is saying, "How do you address conflict when you know the IEP team isn't being truthful?" Excellent question. How do you call them out without coming across like you're calling them out? Yes -- and that's what makes this really difficult, Mary. Excellent point, because we're trying to build trust, right? You can't have a partnership. You can't collaborate with folks that you don't trust. So as soon as you find out that someone is not being truthful, and you know they're not being truthful, that does add another dimension to this.

So I suggest, when I know that that's the case, that those are the people that you really have to hold their feet to the fire. You have to document everything. You have to question everything. You have to ask them for every single thing in writing. You have to record those meetings. I'm a firm believer of, as Maya Angelou says, "When people show you who they are, believe them." Right? We often get families that say, "Do I need to take an advocate with me to my first IEP meeting, my child's turning three." I don't advocate for that, right? I think that the best thing families can do is try to build a relationship and really, have a team with their educators, right? But if you've been working in good faith, and you find out that that's not true of the other side, then you have to change your strategy and your tactics. And now you do have to question and demand. And so those are the folks that you ask to put things in writing, and then it never comes -- so one strategy for that is following every meeting, every phone call, every encounter with them -- YOU write the email, and you say, "Thanks for meeting with me. Here's my understanding of our conversation today." And send that. Now unless they write back and say, "That's not what happened," that will stand as the record of that conversation. So that's one tool that you can use to kind of -- I mean, it's very difficult when you know that the other party is not being honest. So you just have to try to hold them accountable in any way that you can. But that's a strategy that does work pretty well, because now you have something in writing, even though they didn't give it to you. They would have to say that that's not the conversation.

Okay, we still have 15 minutes, I think we'll have time to get through our Chat. "Seek out and get help with having those difficult conversations from a knowledgeable professional advocate. Some states have helpful IEP facilitators." Excellent point, thank you, Paris. I think the IEP facilitators are great. They also can really help in situations where maybe someone's not being truthful, or not acting in good faith. It helps to have that third party to kind of come in and assess. So that's a great point, thank you for sharing that.

"This point is to build the same level start from both sides of a conversation." That's a question -- this point is to -- I'm sorry, Susan, I'm not sure what the question is. If you could just give some more clarity, that would be really helpful. "Enjoy the [INAUDIBLE] service, very helpful." Thank you for joining us, Lorraine. "I like how you said to be brave enough to start a conversation that matters." To me, the emphasis on starting the conversation is so important,

to get the communication started before there are non-related issues that can take over. Thank you, Susan, I appreciate your comment, and yeah, it is bravery, right? You have to really put yourself out there to start some of these conversations, and that is not easy to do. But yes, the sooner the better, so I appreciate that comment. Thank you.

"Your recommended approach is one that I have used with success." Excellent, thank you, Susan. "Keeping the student first is always helpful. Working to keep everyone's mind open, and throw out the 'Yeah, but...' Right! Too many, "Yeah, but..." Exactly. Yes. And I do think you're right, that the more we can realize that we're really all on the same team, right? We're all trying to do the best for that student. And it's not a "us and them," but a "we" -- the better off we all are. Thank you, Najjar. Najjar, I hope that's correct. I hope the tools -- you will find them useful. "You mentioned earlier that if you hear something you agree with, you should acknowledge that by saying something like, 'I agree with you,' or something similar. As a neutral, is that appropriate?" So as a neutral part-- I think, yes. Any time there's a place to highlight where there's agreement, it's a good thing for everyone. It doesn't have to be that you're saying that you agree. It would be more if you're the neutral party, you're trying to confirm that the two people that are working this out are in agreement. And if there's something that they agree on, I think we should call it out and highlight it.

"You said the earlier the better for having these conversations. Would you encourage families and school personnel to use the mediation earlier in the conflict than as they approach a due process hearing? Yes, Connie, I do. I think that often times, families wait too long to start that process, procedural safeguard. Whether it's mediation or due process. Certainly mediation is not as overwhelming process for families. Unfortunately, I think they want to avoid the difficult conversation, and so they wait, and then they're just so angry. And rightfully so. But it just takes such a toll, right? That process is a difficult one. The costs are -- and I know CADRE has their continuing -- and it talks all about the costs of waiting and getting to this level to resolve something. But the other piece is like the mediator that said, "No one leaves happy." When you get to that level of due process, someone is absolutely -- there's definitely a winner and a loser. And you still have to go back and work with these people. So there's no winners or losers when we're not able to continue to work together on behalf of that student. And so yes, I would highly encourage mediation.

One thing that mediation tends to do is to get that communication going, the thing that maybe we couldn't make happen just amongst ourselves. But having that third party to kind of frame the discussion is very helpful. I've been to mediations where everybody's all tense, we get there, we sit down, and the district actually said, "Oh, well, that's not a problem. We're happy to do that." So they didn't understand, or so they said. But there was some miscommunication there, that there was not clarity in what the parent was seeking. And it was 10 minutes, and everybody was done.

Don't forget to fill out the survey, it's in there. "I encourage parents to write down their parent concerns" -- excellent, Kathy, so agree, to share with the school as well as to remind parents

what issues they wish to discuss. Absolutely totally agree. Another point of clarification, because when we write things down, now we're not relying on memory, we're not relying on that verbal communication. But everybody can look at that, and people can ask questions and gain more clarity.

Survey completed -- thank you. Thank you. Oh, "The guides on CADRE's site are wonderful, under Parent-Family Resources are wonderful." Absolutely great. Take a look if you have not done so lately. "Fabulous site for everyone supporting youth with disabilities" -- so true, Sandy. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And Noella has kindly put the link in there for us, so easy for you to click through, and for early intervention as well. "First step could be facilitation" -- totally agree. Thanks for the plug. "How might we get the word out about the value of mediation and IEP facilitation?" That's a great question, Connie. And I think we might need to have another difficult conversation and brainstorm that. Noella has put a link in where she can share some of those resources. Okay, it goes so crazy now, so maybe it just wants to stay on that slide, which is not a bad one to stay on. "Let other families know if it worked for you using social media, word of mouth" -- Sandy, that's a great point. I think families need to hear about successes. We hear a lot about problems, and everyone thinks they're on their own and that things never work out. So I agree. Letting other people know when things work well. Word of mouth -- I'm not sure about social media, but if you can frame it in a way that's safe, I think that's great, too.

"We're also having good success with facilitation in Illinois. It can work great. Stops the conflict from escalating." Thank you, Michael, because that's what we want to do. "Mediation and IEP facilitation also opens the opportunity to learn new information that parents and-or districts were not aware of before, which may offer additional opportunities for collaboration and building common ground." Absolutely, Maryanne. So true, so true. We only have a few minutes left, I'm just hoping I can get through everything. "We now offer an evaluative mediation in Pennsylvania." That's great! That is great.

I think this has been a great conversation. I have had a wonderful time with all of you. I really, really appreciate all of the comments in the Chat, the information sharing. Please visit CADRE -- again, you see lots of links here, with all of their wonderful, wonderful resources. Put in a little plug -- there's my email if anybody needs it. The parentcenterhub.org is where you can see more information about CPIR. And I'm going to turn this back over, I think, to Melanie --?

>> Yes.

>> Okay, I wasn't sure. Okay, and talk about the information that CADRE wants to share with you.

>> Carolyn, thank you so much for your just insights and your generosity, and helping us engage in those critical conversations. This material is fabulous. It's fabulous.

>> Thank you.

>> Rich and valuable. We hope that you found the information that she shared today valuable and meaningful and important in the work that you're doing, and know that this will be posted.

The recording will be available at the archive on our site, so be looking forward to that in a few days. Your feedback is extraordinarily important to us, so please click on that link in the Chat box to fill out a very brief survey to evaluate today's webinar. We very much appreciate your feedback.

If you have any questions for us, don't hesitate to contact CADRE. Visit us online at www.CADRE.org. We look forward to hearing from you if you need any support. And I wanted to remind everybody that our symposium is coming up, just a week after the conference that Carolyn mentioned. But this is our ninth national symposium on Dispute Resolution Special Education. We've got folks coming from a variety of different worlds. You've got educators and parents and Parent Center leaders and districts, and practitioners, and it's really the only conference of its kind that really focuses on dispute resolution. Cost is \$400, includes breakfast and lunch, plus reception. More than 40 sessions to choose from, national leaders, so please come. Registration is going to be available at the end of the month.

So from all of us at CADRE, thank you so much for joining us today. And have a fantastic summer. Take care, everybody.