

Ask Me Anything about Employment webinar with Al Bernier & Amy Gelb

Sue McNamara: Okay, so as I just said, good afternoon, and welcome to Ask Me Anything about Employment with Al Bernier and Amy Gelb. My name is Sue McNamara, and I'll be your moderator today. And Sigal Vax will be our tech support person. This webinar is not a presentation, but rather an interactive question-and-answer period. For the next hour, Amy and owl will respond to any questions you have related to the webinar's topic, which is the Job Market, Connecting with Employers, and the Benefits of Education in Preparation for Employment. Both Amy and Al have extensive experience working in employment services. Al works as an employment specialist; and Amy works as a job coach, job developer, program manager, and trainer.

Today's event is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research. The content of this webinar does not represent the views or policies of the funding agency, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. This webinar will be recorded, transcribed, and posted as an archive on our Center's website.

You all are probably familiar with Zoom by now, but let's review a couple of things first. At the top right-hand corner of your screen, you may view this webinar in gallery view, which shows all the people participating, or you can switch it to speaker view, if you want to focus on Amy or Al when they are speaking, Sigal will mute everyone, as she has already, except for Al, Amy, and me. Please remain muted unless you're called upon.

So during the registration for this event, you were given the opportunity to submit a question in advance, which we did receive some. Then I will ask you if you all have any questions. And, so first to do that in the bottom of your screen, there's a black bar. And if you see by the participants right now, it looks like we have 26. If you, see that and click on that, you'll see a participant's box on the right-hand side. You can, by your name, there should be an indicator that says, raise your hand. Does everyone see that? That's the way you can ask a question; go by your name and then press raise hand. So if you all want to test that for right now, go ahead and test that, and let's see if we can see that you know how to raise your hand. I see Suzanne has done that, Rebecca, Curtis, Leslie, Dany, Michelle. Okay, it looks like you're getting the hang of it. So if you have a question later on, go ahead and lower your hand now, but if you have a question later on, that will alert us that we can call upon you.

But if you'd rather not speak and you'd still have a question, you can type your question down in the chat box, which is also down at the bottom of your

screen, where it says chat. If you click on that, then you can type in a question and we'll try to get it answered as well. So, welcome to this webinar and we hope you'll enjoy this next hour.

Let's start off with one of the questions that was submitted ahead of time. And this was by Judith in West Virginia. She asked, and by the way, I'm going to ask both Al and Amy who prefers to answer these questions. They don't both have to answer, but if they have different answers and they certainly can. So, Judith from West Virginia asked, "How has the COVID-19 virus changed the job market?"

Al Bernier: Amy, I'll let you start with this one.

Amy Gelb: Okay. I'm happy to start with that one. Well, it's certainly a very important question and a very broad question, and it absolutely has changed the job market from every angle. I know for me personally, I am working at home. I currently work for Mass Rehab Commission, and we have to work at home now. We don't know when we will be going back to work. So, I think that's happened for a lot of places, a lot of people. The reality is there's a much higher need for online access. And so people really need to have email addresses, have cell phones, have iPads, have computers. And I know I personally work with a lot of people who don't necessarily have all of those things. So, I think probably the most important thing is that the virus is forcing us to become more tech savvy and to be more comfortable in utilizing tools like we're doing today with this webinar and like anything, the more that we do it and practice, the better we get at it. I know I actually really probably prefer in person where you can see people and talk to them, and there's a lot that sorta gets missed. However, there is a way to sort of have that experience where you still can feel connected to people like Sue mentioned, if we're able to see people that really helps. So I think I'll turn it over to Al, but yeah, the biggest takeaway I feel is really online access.

Al: And I agree with all those sentiments, but I've also been talking to many business leaders and people in the IT world. And they're all talking that this, we're going to see a social change in our society from this pandemic. It had started where we had already started to go online for a lot of our brick and mortar things. I mean, we've been ordering online through Amazon and through other platforms, but now you're seeing even consignment shops are going online and different businesses that used to be strictly brick and mortar are now switching over. So in the future, I see more and more of this happening. And even at this time, there are so many jobs that are coming up, online jobs that are both employer produced and produced by entrepreneurs.

A blog is actually an online job, if you stay at it long enough, you can make money blogging. And there's a lot of jobs like that that are coming up. So I see this as we're going to be transitioning as a society from this, and that we're going to be in a place where it won't matter if you're you have a disability, if you have transportations. As long as you're able to have access to technology, then you'll be able to be connected to society a lot better than we have been in the past.

Sue: That's a very interesting point that will change the dynamics. And some of the things that got in the way for people in the past of getting jobs may not be a problem in the future.

Al: Exactly.

Sue: Thank you. Thank you. And Amy, I wanted to follow up something with you. You said, the fact that you're working from home, what about, many of the people that you work with? Are you still able to work with these people?

Amy: Yes, you know, again, it's about access if people have a cell phone; and I do a lot of meetings over-the-phone using conference calls, webinars, if we can and if the person would like. But I definitely agree in some ways there are some barriers that are eliminated. You know, I drive around a lot; usually not having to do that, I have an opportunity to connect to more people, possibly as long as I can get ahold of them, if they have a cell phone; and also having, if they have an access to an iPad or computer, I'm finding is huge. And what we've been doing, I know as an organization, is trying to find ways for people to get computers, to get free computers. There are some places that actually do provide them, and I've been able to have some equipment mailed out to people when they're engaged in certain training programs. So again, it's about access.

Sue: That's great. Great. Well, thank you. Thank you.

Al: Can I add that, just one thing, much like phone became something that you had to have so much so that landlines became, you know, they had to get connected no matter where, because people had to be connected to a phone. Technology has put us into a place in society, has put us into a place where computers are going to be that old phone system that something that no matter who you are, that's something that's going to have to be available to people. And I don't mean that they'll have to go down to the library to use it. They'll have to have one in their home because it's going to become a necessity of life.

Sue: Yes, yes. Yeah. Thank you. Okay. So, here's another question that was sent in advance. "What are some successful strategies from working at home?"

Amy: I'm happy to go first, Al.

Al: Okay.

Amy: I think that it's about organization. You know, you have to be pretty organized. What I try to do is still have the day planned, the way that I used to, where I started a certain time, I ended a certain time. You know, I took it an hour of vacation time so that I could participate in this webinar with everyone. So having structure, and it kind of reminds me of the psych rehab tools of planning your schedule. I still really try to utilize that in terms of time, time management, structure, I'm using my calendar, making sure having people hopefully be available at the times that we set up for appointments and things. But I think it's about being organized and planful.

Sue: Great. Thank you.

Al: I would like to add that sometimes, because this was thrown in, where a lot of us had to start working at home. For like myself, my agency does that. I found that I still wake up at the same time, I do my same routine as if I'm going into the office, and I keep that routine so that it makes me feel like I'm going to work; and it's less like, "Oh, I can just do this now, or I can do this later," and not get to it. That procrastination will kill you. And I found that with several of my colleagues where you tried to get some information during the day and you're getting no responses. And all of a sudden it's 7:00 at night, I'm getting responses. They've switched their times, and they're trying to condense their days or whatever. And that organized structure and time management is extremely important. But I think it's also keeping that mindset that I am going to work, I am at work at this time. So I've got my own office in my house that is just strictly for work. And that's where I go. I'm doing Zoom meetings and people are sitting in bed. So it's a little unprofessional, but you've kind of got a wonder, you know, how much work are you getting done?

Sue: Right. And how about the growth of the online job market these days? Al, you spoke before about how you see the world changing in the future. So, do you see job postings out there already for people that we work with?

Al: Oh, yes. There's a lot of job postings. Some, well, I interviewed four people that have online jobs just so that I was ready for this seminar. And two of them are

researchers from a hospital, hospital researchers that they were doing an office job before and can no longer get to an office. So they've transitioned to online work, doing the same work that they did before. And what they do is they compile data for oncology. And they submit their reports. And, the interesting thing is the four people I interviewed, three of them got their jobs through networking. And that is an important, no matter what job you're looking for, networking is so important. And social media has, like LinkedIn that you can get on, and it's a great networking source, a great place to put yourself out there, and make people aware. You can also join in and help with people who are having problems with their businesses on LinkedIn. We've always heard of, like data entry and transcriptionists and stuff like that online jobs, but there is so much coming onto the platform that it's going to be amazing to see where it goes. I mean, you can do be a web designer if you want and be your own employer. You can be a product tester online. People can make money watching videos online for companies and rating them. It's just amazing how many opportunities there are out there. And with that, they'll be more and more opportunities that come up as brick and mortars fade out of existence. And as more employers see that they don't really need an office when the person has a home that they can work out of.

Sue: That's very interesting. And do you see that, Amy, maybe you could answer this one. Do you see that your people you work with, are they tech savvy enough to take on these online types of jobs?

Amy: You know, that's a great question. And, you know, of course I work with a lot of people who have different skill levels, abilities, different levels of education. So it really depends on what they want. Some people have some good computer skills, but you know, I work with a lot of people that want jobs that are in a physical workplace. And so, along with a lot of the online jobs, there are still some places, some areas, some industries that still have huge need. I'm sure people are aware and I made a list, but places like Amazon and Whole Foods, now that Amazon owns Whole Foods, there's a huge need. There's a huge need for drivers, for people in the warehouse. There's still a need for people working in all supermarkets, working in health care; places, actually the call centers for unemployment claims. So yeah, I made a list of those types of places because the reality is there are, yes, there are lots of jobs going online, and people are going to need to transition to that, but there's also still a need for people to be doing warehouse work, delivery work. Those services aren't going to go away, I don't think any time soon. So another thing I really want to mention again, the LinkedIn, I know Al mentioned that, that is considered one of the best networking tools online for looking for work. In fact, a lot of the times, apparently when someone applies to a job, that's one of the first things the

employer does is look at your LinkedIn profile. So I definitely want to recommend that if you have one, if you don't have one, you can certainly make one easily enough. The One Stop Career Centers usually offer training on doing LinkedIn, because even if you have a LinkedIn profile, there's lots of ways to improve it so that you're going to become more visible online. So yeah, the LinkedIn is huge and it is still about networking, even if we are working from home and working online, it's about connecting. And also, the One Stop Career Centers are everywhere in every state. They have tons and tons of resources, tons of free information, free webinars, so I highly want, I want to recommend them highly as well.

Sue: Great. Great. Thank you.

Al: And, I'm just going to say that, VR services are amazing, and I'm a graduate from VR services, and if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have got, be able to get the education I got and changed careers the way I did. So thank you very much for VR services.

Amy: That's terrific. That's terrific to hear.

Sue: Well, let's follow up with what you're saying, Al, about the whole education angle. **What types of education opportunities do you think are there now or needed for the future for people to get jobs?**

Al: Well, with the people that I work with, it depends on where they want to, what kind of field they want to go into. I've got people that want to go into the trades, so I try to hook them up with education, if it's out there, to get them involved into that trade. If not, apprenticeships, because trades still have apprenticeships. And if I can't go that way, I go after the people that I know in the trades and ask them, can you use somebody onsite? They don't know anything, but they are willing to learn, they're a hard worker. And that's part of the networking that I use. Now, when it comes to education other than that, I've got people that are going to everything from adult ed to college right now. Depending on their skill level and what they want, they're all looking to get into jobs that require some level of tech savviness, but also some other skill levels. So education is very important depending on what you're going for. It's really, you know, I wouldn't recommend somebody to go to college, if they're goal is just working in a convenience store or being a truck driver. There's a certain amount of education that you need for those jobs, but they don't need a college education. But, I will say that I never thought I'd go to college. And once I got into it, it drew me in, it drew me in hard, and I ended up getting a four-year degree. So I'm a proponent for education, I really am, and I try to tell

people that it's never too late. If I can go back to school in my 50s, they can go to school.

Sue: Good for you! I see we have a hand up, and I'm not sure how to pronounce your name, Sai Yen? Whoops. It looks like you're muted. Your hand was up, but now you're, there you go. Yeah. Okay. What is your,

Yen: You can call me Yen.

Sue: Okay, what is your question?

Yen: Oh, no, I just gave a thumbs up because I'm an advocate of education as well.

Sue: Oh, thumbs up, okay. Sorry. I misread your band signal. Well, I've spent 25 minutes with questions, some of the questions that have been asked in advance, what questions might you have right now that this conversation has prompted? So I can open it up if someone wants to raise their hand, and we'll call on you, and you unmute yourself and ask your question.

Amy: What about if anyone, maybe not a question, but a comment regarding education or something else that...

Suzanne: I have a question. Excuse me, I have a question.

Sue: Sure. Go ahead, Suzanne.

Suzanne: My question is for Amy. Hi. I live in Massachusetts, and my question is, for those of us who were on a waiting list for an intake with Mass Rehab just prior to the virus striking, where are we with those waiting lists?

Amy: Well, first of all, I don't, it depends where you live, but Mass Rehab actually does not have a waiting list right now. And I also should add a caveat that I personally work as a mental health specialist counselor, I'm not a general VR counselor. However, I still can tell you that there is no waiting list, and that we are all working from home. So if you or someone else is waiting for services, what I recommend that you do is reach out and call the office that you are trying to get services from, and see how you can have someone help you to get that intake. But there is no wait list at the current time at MRC.

Suzanne: Well, thank you so much.

Amy: Sure, sure. Yeah. Just call you gotta just give them a call.

Suzanne: A great, I have the name of two various individuals that I had started communication, communicating with prior to.

Amy: Excellent.

Suzanne: Thank you so much!

Amy: Yeah, yeah, sure.

Sue: Yeah. Suzanne, you had sent that question in and it was on my list to be asked, but I'm glad you asked it yourself. Other questions? Do people have other questions right now, or comments, as Amy said.

Participant: I don't have no questions right now. I just want to say 'hello.' Sorry, I'm late. I had trouble, I had so much trouble logging in, so Hey!

Amy + Sue: Welcome!

Participant: Thank you.

Sue: How about anyone else?

Sigal: Sue, I put up a question in the chat box, I can ask it myself.

Sue: I don't see a question.

Al: I don't see a question either.

Amy: Me, either.

Sigal: Oh, it's for people in the waiting room. Okay. So I'll ask about the, I wanted to ask about the skills that people need now with this whole online situation. So the people that we usually work with, we're gearing them towards specific skills, and now that's a whole new set of skills. What's your experience with these new skills they need?

Amy: Is this directed to me?

Sigal: Both of you.

Amy: Oh, okay. my experience with meeting new skills or getting new skills?

Sigal: With training people or new skills, or what are the gaps that people experienced in terms of the skills they have to work online?

Amy: Right, right. Well, again, it depends on the individual. I fortunately have many people who have phones that we text, and a lot of people that I work with like texting, so people can text. They're really just about there in terms of having the skills. What I found I've done for a couple of people that tend to be, you know, they haven't had computer skills for whatever reason. I try to get them into some training program where they can get some of those skills. And, two people that I'm thinking of that needed the skills, they're a little bit older, they don't have computers. So finding ways to get them a computer, a certain training program, having that training, having the computer sent to them. And this was a computer training program, by the way, that used to operate all in person, but they've had to move online as well. So, trying to find ways to help people improve their skills, but having basic computer skills is, like we're saying all along, is just really key. And I think a lot of it really comes down to if the person's willing, if they're willing to learn, they can absolutely learn how to do it. They can learn the phone, the texting, whatever it is, they just have to be a little open to it.

Sue: And as AI said before, age doesn't matter.

AI: No, it doesn't. The willingness does though, because I volunteered at a nursing home for a few years; and people in there would not, they weren't willing to even pick up a smartphone because they were not willing to learn. And it's too bad because those are the types of places that would really benefit from the technology sector, especially with all the new technology coming out that can actually give people a vacation experience by putting on a set of eyeglasses. Can you imagine how much that would change somebody's boring life in a nursing home? I'm not saying to replace activities, but boy, it would definitely increase their fun level.

Amy: Right. And by the way, the only reason why I mentioned age is that there's a certain age of population where people didn't have as much of a need for the computer. I don't think it in any way reflects their ability to learn, if they're willing. But that's why I mentioned like a couple of people that are 60 and older that have been able to go through life not needing a computer or wanting a computer. It's a little different than working with someone who's in their 20s, who's already had the exposure and they're already doing all the online stuff.

So that's the difference that I'm seeing. And I think, as time goes on, that's not going to be the case anymore because we're all going to need to have it. It's going to become essential, like you said.

Al: Okay. And that's true to a point, but I was actually having to tutor a 20-year-olds in college on how to research and actually use a computer other than for games. It's amazing how much time they spent on social media and games on their computer. And their research was some of it was blogs. And I had to show them how. Okay, when I started college five years ago, I didn't know how to turn on a computer. I still had a flip phone. My advisor talked me through two online courses in my first semester. And I ended up being a technology tutor by my second year and having so much fun teaching people how to use computers the right way, you know, how to actually get information out of them. That I'm an advocate now, I really am. I never thought I would be. I never thought, I lived my whole life on a homestead. So believe me, I understand that this is a big thing, a will, the will for somebody to learn; it doesn't matter if it's technology or a new job. It's that will. And sometimes that's the hardest part when we're talking to people that are on either SSI or SSDI, and they have lost the will to look any further than where their life is right now. So it's showing them that there's more to the job market than just a paycheck. There's a lot more. There's that social interaction that you sometimes can't get anywhere else. It's a very important part of our life.

Sue: Well, it's a, we've had other, webinars about this topic of people and the disincentives of getting off public support and how scary that can be. But what you're saying, Al, is that when there's a passion towards what you're learning and then a super interest, then that can really just help you just go far. And yes, there's so much more to work than just a paycheck; it's the comradery, it's learning, and depending on what the job is, it may be a helping profession or anything, any type of service-oriented thing. Yeah, it's a lot more than just a paycheck.

Okay, well let me go back to my list of questions, and then we can open it up again. So, what are some strategies for how to find a job in the present job market now? What should people do? How can anybody out there who might be a job developer, how do you work with people at your agencies, what strategies do you actually use to help people find a job now?

Al: Well, there's a lot of job openings, even right now with this happening where I have to, my clients are in group homes. So I have to be a little careful of where we look for work right now because I don't want them to be jeopardized by their health being compromised in a new work environment. So I have to be a

little careful with that. But, some of the strategies we already talked about, like networking. It's important. If you know somebody, and everybody, even the people I work with, have people that they know, but our staff knows people. So we network through staff, we network through the people they know. So, a network is basically might start with a drop. And as it goes out from that, just like a waves in a lake, it gets bigger and bigger, and you get more and more, and you expand that network, and you're able to find jobs usually that way. I also have been, when you're talking about job developing; when I go to an employer, I find out their needs and see how they're working at their job right now. I mean, sometimes they don't see a problem, or they have a problem and they don't really see how that problem can be resolved. And to be able to sit there and watch and participate by asking questions and not being intrusive, but showing that I want to help them out makes a huge difference on their acceptance of my proposition of changing something that they may not have thought about before and making it more profitable to them, or that it fills a need that they may not have seen or a need that they weren't able to fill because of time constraints or monetary considerations. It's working with employers that make my job interesting. I love working with my clients, but it's working with the employers and helping them solve problems that I enjoy the most because I'm going in there almost as a consultant at times.

Sue: And a little bit of a matchmaker too, when you find somebody who can fill a need.

Al: And I don't mind being a matchmaker. How about you, Amy?

Amy: Yeah, I actually really love job developing as well. I've done a lot of that in previous work of mine. I think it is definitely about a match, getting to know, you want to know the person that wants a job, as well as knowing the employer, what their needs are. And it is all about relationship because if you have that relationship, you can make it happen for everybody and make everyone make it work. So I think, again, in terms of finding a job that someone would like, I think it's also important, of course, to look at the websites that are available for job search. I know I personally like looking at postings, it helps me get ideas for the people that I'm serving. So I made a list of some of the top websites for doing search, and probably most people are familiar, but again, you can set up so that they are actually sending you postings. So the first one I would say is the LinkedIn because there is a job search component there. And the more, the bigger your network, the larger you're going to have access to more people that you may know at different employers. The first one I wrote down is Indeed. Another one that's very helpful that people may not always think of is Craigslist. Craigslist because it tends to be more informal and you

can do a search more based on your local community. Monster is also considered a good one, Simply Hired, Career Builder, Snag-A-Job. A lot of times people like Facebook as well. But I think it's really about doing a combination of searching. I mean, it's sort of a different if you're a job developer looking for someone else and you're going into the employer, that's great. But also looking at all of the websites, having your LinkedIn profile. The Career Centers are also another great way to look for jobs. There's a tool there that you can put in key words and search by the number of miles you're willing to travel or go. So those are the biggies that I have. And I'm wondering if anyone in the group here knows of any website that you think is just phenomenal for searching, maybe depending on industry or something. But I think we probably have a lot of knowledge out here with everyone participating as well. Right, so I wanted to ask.

Sue: You can also write it into the chat box, if you're not comfortable speaking. Here we go. ZipRecruiter.

Amy: Oh yeah. Yup.

Al: Yeah. And that, and don't forget that if there's a company that you want to put an application in, most companies have their own sites that you can put the application in. You don't have to necessarily have a job opening, but you can put your application into any company.

Amy: That's a great point, yes.

Al: And don't be discouraged because some of them are very long. I've sat with people and filled out online applications that they did everything. I mean, they were on there for a couple hours filling out an application because it made you take a couple of tests and other things to check, so don't be discouraged by it. Look at your job search as a job and actively spend time doing that. And I know a lot of people get a little bit aggravated and sometimes disappointed, don't be. There are a lot of jobs out there; just keep working at it. As long as you're, you're putting in your time and effort Make sure you have a polished resume, make sure that if you are using social media. A lot of employers are looking at social media nowadays, clean it up a little bit. Social media can be a deterrent to getting hired. It can also be a great benefit, if your social media looks good, it has you posting things, like you volunteer, you do a charity functions, and that type of stuff. I mean, a lot of people want to see those type of postings on their employees' list. So make sure you keep your social media clean.

Sue: Good, nice, nice point there. In the chat box, it looks like Judah would like to add some experience. If you would unmute yourself, Judah.

AI: Here he is.

Judah: First of all, I left the Center more than 10 years ago, but the memories are very good and positive. So I feel the Center gave me some immunization or power and more open minded to go back to the daily life. And I think swept terrible, because I am Israeli, and is changing some law and many blows and I had to fight with my daily problems. My lecture that I studied was some accounting for CPA and law, and I worked as a government tax investigation for 10 years. So sometimes I was more experienced lawyer and as a professional. So it gave me knowledge, but the Center itself give you some hints to go on and to do the good job. One of them is I was late to work. I was neglecting before the subject and I came home and I knew friends from past. I knew I tried to meet new people. I went to some lecture of a trade associations, and the summer period I remember was not lucky to find a work. So I took, I worked in the supermarket that I could do best because I wasn't the ability to launch in a very difficult world. And the supermarket, I was surprised, there was a customer of many, many jails to the customer because my English was more improved by studying a period at New York University. And I know some German from a period that I lived in Germany. So what they want to say, sometimes you have in yourself, some power, some hints that you don't think, you don't accept them, and you don't think that either in yourself and suddenly people discover you, and you'll have the success. You don't see nothing, even relationships as a friend or girlfriend, things are change. You're awake. You go to sleep at night, you wake in the morning, something in the middle of day, things are changed. Be open minded, and try to understand why as a site, there's in mine. Today, I have the lecture about startup, and he said the most Israelis failed in the startup nation from, only one is upset. Why? Because he failed to solicit a demand. So close your mind to your ideas, to your source, and be open minded as a site. Once, twice, ask them, you know, what is the demand from the market, from the manager, or whatever it will be. And this, I wouldn't have the belief that a success would be launching? Good luck to everybody. And I was glad to meet the person from the Center again.

Sue: Okay. Thank you for your comments. Thank you.

Judah: Regards to Dori and Lenny and Philippe.

Sue: We will say hello to them for you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, you prompted an idea for another question is, **what about if somebody wants to become self-**

employed. How would you go about training them to start their own business at this time?

Al: Go ahead, Amy.

Amy: Okay. Well, I guess there's sort of two questions. One, to me is, I used to actually be in business. So I totally relate to that. It's a little different if someone is coming through the MRC door, because it's a lot, it has to be a lot more formal in terms of being able to demonstrate that you're going to be able to earn a certain amount of money. But I think that the key either way is that you have to have a really solid plan, and you want to look at resources that are available. One that I know off right away is called Score, and you can check that out, but also you can check with Career Centers because sometimes they have some tools, some training around that, but I've seen some really wonderful presentations on self-employment that were done by a provider out in Western Mass, NEBA, Northeast Business Associates, where they have a whole department based on helping individuals create their own businesses. You may want to check them out, just because I saw a lot of presentations, people had such interesting businesses, things that you wouldn't even think of that really worked. I know one person had a clothing business of helping people dress for success, and she made it work. I mean, she made a living doing that. I think it takes a lot of time and effort and energy, but it does pay off, like that man said. Another man that I saw did a presentation where he was very good at woodworking and he made a cat scratching boards, and he did very well. But again, I think you need to have a plan; you need to have resources; you need to know how you're going to make it work. I remember doing some trainings on this, and I'm blanking on some of the resources, but I think having a plan and knowing how you're going to make it work, how much money you need to make, is there a lot of overhead involved; all of those questions, you really need a business plan. And again, if you try to do it through VR, it's going to add a whole bunch of other steps that make it more formal because, of course, we have to help the person demonstrate that they're going to end up with a job. So anyway, I wish you all the luck, if someone is planning on going into business, I'd love to hear your ideas any way.

Al: I've got a little bit to add to that. Some of my clients are artists. So, for them, it can be quite stressful to be out in public trying to sell their art, like at a sidewalk, a showing, or even at a gallery. They become very stressed at that. Well, now there's many online alternatives to selling art that where you can do it by consignment. And basically, it's a consignment shop for art, and there's 25 websites that are available to artists now for doing that. So, they're self-employed in an artistic manner. And I've also got a self-employed individual

that designs websites. And he's a private contractor, or what would you call a.., he hires out his services for to different companies that need their website designed or updated. Yep. So there are other ways where you don't need a lot of materials to be able to start a business, and can do it pretty easily. It all depends on what the business is. Yeah.

Sue: That reminds me, I heard someone on the radio just the other day, talking about a business she created during this whole pandemic time that I think her daughter was having a birthday and she was 12 years old or something. And she decided overnight when the daughter was sleeping, she decorated her whole yard with balloons. So when she woke up, she just saw this, when it just made, you know during these conditions, it made her day. So that just prompted a whole set of ideas that she started this business on basic yard decorations for this time that we're in—graduations, weddings, all these kinds of things. So you all have seen a lot of things on the news where people have done some very creative things during this time. So, you need to feed into that, you know, feed into the creative ideas and see what can happen, I guess. The sky's the limit.

AI: Yeah. I see from our chats that, and I'm not going to try to say your name, is a supported-education practitioner and she's self-employed doing that. A lot of those, a lot of being self-employed; there's a lot to that. I mean, you've got to remember you're reporting your own income, taxes and all that. So, there's a lot more to being self-employed than just coming up with the idea of something you want to sell or something you want to do. The work can be quite daunting. I mean, there's a lot to it, but if you're able to do that, more power to you. You're from Malaysia, and congratulations, you're able to do this because I see more and more people getting into supported education, especially right now with all our schools are closed in the state. So, and I see that as a, maybe more and more coming about in the future. We have snow days where I am, and all the teachers are worried now that they won't have snow days anymore because they're going to have to teach from home on snow days.

Sue: Right, the precedent has been set now.

AI: Yes.

Sue: Okay. We just have a few more minutes. I wonder if there are any other questions that people would like to unmute themselves and speak or write into the chat box. And while we're waiting, I wanted to put something into the chat box. I was told by David from the United Kingdom that he knew of, MIT, which

is Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which is across the river from us here. They have a free online course, called Shaping Work of the Future, and it's very relevant to what we're talking about. And I just put the link into the chat box, if somebody is interested in that. I'm sorry?

Al: That is awesome.

Sue: Good. So I think that's going on starting either today or tomorrow, but it's obviously a relevant topic.

Amy: Absolutely. That's great.

Sue: Any other comments or questions in these last couple minutes?

Al: No.

Sue: Okay. Well, I want to thank Al and Amy so much for answering our questions today, and I want to thank all of you for attending today. It was wonderful. We have these Ask Me Anything about Employment webinars every couple of months, and we haven't lately for a variety of reasons. But this topic that we came up with certainly was relevant. So we'll have some more in the near future. And, now that we have your email addresses from registration, we'll contact you when there's another announcement coming up. Also, you'll receive a survey in the next few days about your experience with this webinar today, and so we look forward to your feedback. Thank you all so much for attending, and we look forward to your participation again in the future. So thank you.

Amy: Thanks so much.

Al: And thank you, Sigal and Amy and Sue. I really enjoyed this.

Sue: Great, great. Thank you. It was wonderful.

Amy: I really enjoyed my internship at the Center when I was there. It was wonderful. I have great memories.

Sue: Thank you. Thank you.

Sigal: Thank you, everyone. Keep safe.

Sue: Take care. Bye.