- [Wayne] Hello, and welcome to today's webinar, in which we will explore the topic of how technology can deliver accessibility outcomes in the workplace. Before we get started with the content and hand off to our speakers, there are a few housekeeping items that we'd like to quickly go over with you now. If you look over to your right-hand side of your webinar screen, you'll see a Q&A window. Today, we have subject matter experts from Microsoft, and the New South Wales Public Service Commission, joining us, and they will be happy to answer any questions you may have in real time. We'll spend the last 10 to 15 minutes, once the presentation is finished, for Q&A. As a side note, the Q&A today will be completely chat-based. If you look over to the right-hand side of your screen once again, we're provided additional resources with some links that we thought would be helpful as a starting point to continue your own research. You can click on those links at any time you'd like throughout this webinar. In addition, we will also be posting an on-demand recording of this session that will made available in the email that you used to register for this webinar. Lastly, you can customize your viewing experience using the webinar widgets. You can click on the widgets that you'd like to display on-screen, and also choose to resize the windows to cater for your viewing preferences. This wraps up the housekeeping. We hope you enjoy the session today, and I'd like to hand off to our first speaker.

- Hello everyone, I'm Gail LeBransky, and I head the disability employment team at the New South Wales Public Service Commission, and I'm very happy that you've joined us for today's webinar. Did you know that one in five people in New South Wales live with disability? As we race towards an increasingly digital future, the accessibility of digital content needs to keep up. Which is why today's webinar is so important. The New South Wales government is the largest employer in Australia, and is transitioning to more digital ways of working. As we make this transition, the accessibility of digital services and technologies is critical for both our customers and our employees. When we think about digital accessibility, we tend to think only of one of our senses, like sight. But digital accessibility affects a wide range of people, including those with hearing impairments, people with mental health conditions, and other physical difficulties. Technology like Microsoft's Office 365 can change lives, by opening paths for people with disability, helping them to be more productive and more included. The accessibility of Microsoft's existing products is critical to the day-to-day work in the government sector. The Office 365 suite provides many accessibility features that allows users to make and distribute accessible and inclusive documents. Accessibility goes beyond work. High-quality built-in screen readers on Windows, and products like the new Xbox Adaptive Controller, allows anyone including people with disability to enjoy the community aspects of play. I'd especially like to acknowledge Microsoft for their continued commitment to innovating in the digital accessibility space. And thank you for being here, because great technology is only as good as its users.

- It doesn't matter if I'm short or tall.

- Anxious.

- Or obsessed.

- [Male Narrator] A girl signs. Another girl.

- Loud.

- [Male Narrator] A young boy.

- Quiet.

- [Male Narrator] A tall girl.

- Or quirky.

- [Male Narrator] A girl with a prosthetic leg.

- It doesn't matter if I walk.

- [Male Narrator] A blond boy.

- Run.

- [Male Narrator] A girl on a scooter.

- Scoot.

- [Male Narrator] A girl uses a wheelchair.

- Or wheel.

- [Male Narrator] The signing girl, she signs. Another girl.

- Smirk.

- [Male Narrator] A girl with Down syndrome.

- Smile.

- [Male Narrator] He gestures, yes.

- Or laugh.

- [Male Narrator] A boy using a wheelchair.

- If my disability is visible.

- [Male Narrator] A tall boy.

- Invisible.

- [Male Narrator] Another boy.

- Or nonexistent.

- [Male Narrator] We believe in empowering us all. Microsoft.

- Steven Worrall, managing director of Microsoft Australia. Thanks very much for listening in to this webinar. When we get together here at Microsoft Australia, we always like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that we're meeting on, and today I'm sitting on Gadigal land, one of the 29 clans of the Eora nation. And I'd like to extend my respects to their elders, past, present and future for their ongoing connection with, and their ongoing custodianship of this wonderful land that we get to live and work on. And I'd like to extend those same respects to whatever part of the country that you might be in today, listening in to the webinar. Now here at Microsoft, we're really passionate about the role that technology can play to empower every person, and every organization to achieve their goals. And as it relates to this topic of accessibility, we don't think there's a better place for us to put that mission to work. It's an interesting fact that it's estimated that there are a billion people on the planet that have some form of short or long-term disability, and it's sobering that, within that community, unemployment rates are about twice the average rate. When you realize that about 70% of those long and short-term disabilities are invisible, but also the fact that many disabilities can be permanent, temporary, or situational, it's no question that the application of technology to provide more accessible ways for all of us to connect with the digital world around us, can benefit every person on the planet. And so today we've gathered some experts with wonderful lived experiences to share with you on the topic, and it's now my very great pleasure to introduce you to Jenny Lay-Flurrie, who's the chief accessibility officer for Microsoft. I hope you enjoy the webinar.

- Hi there. I'm Jenny Lay-Flurrie, chief accessibility officer at Microsoft. So, accessibility, what is this thing? Accessibility is really how we empower people with disabilities and empower a lot of innovation, whether it's in the physical or the digital space. And accessibility are the key principles by which we can do that. And also if you lean into inclusive design, designing with, through, and for people with disabilities, you're also gonna unlock a huge amount of innovation. 'Cause disability's a big gig. We all know this, but the numbers tell us that too. It's over a billion people in the world, over 70% of it is invisible to the eye and non-apparent, you wouldn't be able to tell, if a person had a disability or not, and it ranges from sight, vision, mobility, right the way through to mental health and cognitive neurodiversity. And a lot more in between, 'cause disability isn't a one thing. Often individuals can present with more than one disability at one time, and it can also hit you at any time. It is one of those gorgeous things that's just part of being human. And so our job, my job, at Microsoft, is to figure out how we can empower, and that's through our products, through our processes, through how we work with employees as well as with customers, and making sure that that's durable, that it's, it's something that, is sustained, throughout the lifecycle of a product, and throughout the lifecycle of an organization. I want accessibility to be as strong at Microsoft in 10 years, as it is today. And so, as you wallow and immerse yourself, do think about how you can power yourself up. If there's one thing that I've learned about accessibility over the years, it's that this is a space that you do and need to be educated on to have the maximal impact that you wanna have. So investing your time, your biggest commodity, in this area, is incredibly important. Learning the key principles of how you can make sure that your stuff, no matter what your stuff is, is accessible, will empower more than you realize. My disability, I am deaf and have been since a very small age, I've had declining deafness, and over the years I've acquired more disabilities, 'cause that's old age for you, but I'm one of just the billion out there. So this webinar is going to be split up into six pillars which represent the beautiful diversity of disability, from vision, hearing, mobility, through to speech, cognitive and neuro. And that, by the way, represents so much of the gorgeousness that there is in disability, from mental health right the way through to what you can see, the majority being what you cannot. And then really thinking through for each of those, the process of thinking about building an inclusive culture, starting with people. How do you include people with disabilities, how do you screen in, not out? How do you make sure that you're capturing that untapped talent pool that is people with disabilities? And then how do you make sure that you build a system, and a framework around it, to ensure that you know how accessible your stuff is, 'cause if you don't know if your stuff is accessible, it's not. How you weave it into your products, whatever your products happen to be, and then how do you innovate for the future, and make sure that you're creating the next wave of technology, the next wave of gorgeousness that's going to empower people coming right the way, full circle, back to the beginning? Have fun, enjoy the process, ask questions, and I look forward to seeing the impact of what you create on the back of this. Thank you.

- [Emmanuele] In this section, we're gonna focus on accessibility solutions for vision. We are joined by Jon Barrett, who is a modern workplace specialist, and Kenny Singh, one of our security and compliance experts, who is also an accessibility council member at Microsoft Australia.

- Hi, I'm Jon Barrett from Microsoft. Y'know, Microsoft has a number of solutions with people, for people with vision impairment. That could be anything from people with colorblindness, partial vision, and that could be either a temporary or a permanent condition. We're here today to talk about some lived experiences, and I'm here with Kenny.

- Thank you Jon. My name is Kenny Singh, I am a cybersecurity and compliance architect in our partner division at Microsoft. I've had an eye condition for the last 20 years. I was diagnosed with this eye condition when I was around 18. Over the last 20 years, there's actually been different forms of access to information. 20 years ago, it was really really difficult to do simple things, being partially sighted, for example, read books or work with a computer or work with a phone, move around on your own, independently, and so on and so forth. Today, we actually have a range of technology available to us, that basically makes all of these different experiences a lot easier. We have technology built into the Microsoft software and services and solutions. We actually have AI and machine learning-powered technology that basically makes the physical world more accessible, from objects to, people and so on and so forth. We have technology that basically makes the whole transportation experience more accessible, so moving from one place to the other using technology in a completely independent form. So technology's a really, is a really, really big empowerer at this moment in time. It's the, it's the thing that, to me personally, differentiates the experience of someone like me, who had a partial sight, 20 years ago and today. If it wasn't for the technology, I would not be able to do what I actually do at Microsoft today, my role as a cybersecurity and compliance architect. We have a few videos that demonstrate the technology that you can use on a day-to-day basis to be more productive.

- I'm Saqib Shaikh. I lost my sight when I was seven, and shortly after that, I went to a school for the blind. And that's where I was introduced to talking computers, and that really opened up a whole new world of opportunities. I joined Microsoft 10 years ago, as a software engineer. I love making things which improve people's lives, and one of the things I've always dreamt of since I was at university was this idea of something that could tell you at any moment what's going on around you.

- [AI Voice Assistant] I think it's a man jumping in the air doing a trick on a skateboard.

- I teamed up with like-minded engineers to make an app which lets you know who and what is around you. It's based on top of the Microsoft intelligence APIs, which makes it so much easier to make this kind of thing. The app runs on smart phones, but also on the Pivothead SMART glasses. When you're talking to a bigger group, sometimes you can talk and talk and there's no response and you think, is everyone listening really well, or are they half asleep? And you never know.

- [AI Voice Assistant] I see two faces. 40-year-old man with a beard looking surprised. 20-year-old woman looking happy.

- The app can describe the general age and gender of the people around me, and what their emotions are, which is incredible. One of the things that's most useful about the app is the ability to read out text.

- [Waitress] Hello, good afternoon. Here's your menu.

- [Saqib] Great, thank you. I can use the app on my phone to take a picture of the menu, and it's gonna guide me on how to take that correct photo.

- [AI Voice Assistant] Move camera to the bottom right and away from the document.

- And then it'll recognize the text. Read me the headings.

- [AI Voice Assistant] I see appetizers, salads, paninis, pizzas, pastas.

- Hi. Years ago, this was science fiction. I never thought it would be something that you could actually do, but artificial intelligence is improving at an ever-faster rate, and I'm really excited to see where we can take this. Hey!

- Hi.

- [Saqib] As engineers, we're always standing on the shoulders of giants, building on top of what went before, and in this case, we've taken years of research from Microsoft Research, to pull this off.

- [AI Voice Assistant] I think it's a young girl throwing an orange Frisbee in the park.

- [Saqib] For me, it's about taking that far-off dream, and building it one step at a time. I think this is just the beginning.

- [Emmanuele] Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO.

- I'm here with Anne Taylor from our accessibility team, and, Anne, you're gonna talk to us about how you use AI in your daily life.

- Anne is blind.

- Absolutely, Satya. So Seeing AI's an ongoing research project that uses AI for computer vision, to enhance the understanding and the perception of the physical environment, for the blind, and individual with low vision. And this app has been available, for free, on the iOS App Store, for over a year now, and our customers have found it to be valuable tool for interacting with their physical environment. Isn't that great?

- That's awesome, and I know you yourself use it every day. So you wanna show us how you use it, yeah?

- Sure. Absolutely. This app has nine channels. So, each of them offers specialized features, such as identifying product by using barcode scanner. Let me show you.

- All right.

- A smart phone. A box.

- I have the Seeing AI set as, on the product channel, and I will scan the barcode.

- [App Voice] Processing. Microsoft Surface Dial. Cursor.

- That's pretty cool. So you were just able to switch channels, and then change to the product channel and put an object in front of it and it recognized it.

- Yes, indeed.

- That's great.

- So, I would like to show you, the one that I use most is short text channel.

- Ah.

- [Male Narrator] She positions a braille business card.

- [Anne] So first let me switch to it.

- [App Voice] Share button. Channel. Person. Prop, document. Short text.

- [Male Narrator] Taps her phone. Points it at the card.

- [App Voice] Anne Taylor. Supportability director. Accessibility. Microsoft Corporation. Anne Taylor.

- That's so cool. You even had the card backwards and it was able to just read it.

- Yes indeed. By the way, it's a typical occurrence for me, to read business card upside-down.

- No, I can quite imagine. And, can you then even take handwriting and recognize it as well?

- Yes. And this is really meaningful to me personally, is because for the first time ever, I can use this app to independently read personal notes that's written to me, from my family and my loved one.

- Lemme, let's give it a try, huh? Let me,

- Sure.

- I mean, and this might be a real test of this app, because if it can read my handwriting, anything is possible.

- [Male Narrator] He scribbles a note.

- All right.

- All set?

- Yes.

- Let me go ahead and switch to that channel.

- [App Voice] Channel, currency. Scene preview. Color preview. Handwriting preview.

- [Male Narrator] She touches the note, and positions her phone over it.

- I will take a photo and figure out what you wrote here.

- Take picture. Take, processing. Accessibility is awesome.

- Yes, accessibility is awesome indeed.

- Absolutely, we can agree on that, and to see you use this application, the fact that we have these ever-growing list of channels, and the powers it brings to you, and to be able to put it to everyday use and empower people to be able to do more with technology, so it's fantastic. Thank you very much for showing us this application in use.

- Thank you very much, Satya. Let's celebrate accessibility.

- All right.

- [Male Narrator] They high-five.

- [Emmanuele] Now let's take a look at some features, that quite a lot of us will get some benefit from.

- [Female Narrator] Windows 10's Ease of Access settings let Megan personalize her computer to meet her unique needs. The settings are organized by needs: vision, hearing, and interaction. Narrator, a built-in screen reader for the 36 million people in the world who are blind, is available along with text sizing options for the 216 million people who have low vision. Megan can even change her pointer size and color to make it easier to find. Built-in accessibility and inclusivity tools within Microsoft 365 empower everyone on Megan's team through experiences connected across devices, and applications, to flexibly work and collaborate in their own way. 36 million people in the world are blind, and can benefit from a screen reader like Narrator, but an even larger portion of the population, 217 million people, have low vision and would benefit from seeing larger text. Consequently, this is the top option in the list. Color filters are particularly useful for people who are colorblind, which is more prevalent than many people realize. As many as one in 12 men with Northern European ancestry have the common form of red-green colorblindness. For people who are red-green colorblind, Excel spreadsheets can be the bane of their existence, if they show important information like profit and loss, using green and red formatting. They can easily turn on a filter, try out different settings to see which one makes the nine colors on the wheel more distinct, and pick the one that works best for them. Magnifier is great for someone with low vision who can't see the smaller print on smaller laptop screens. Magnifier follows the focus of the mouse on the screen, and automatically zooms in to the set percentage. It increases both the size of the cursor, and the text on other displays. Not only can Megan customize her Windows experience to meet her needs, she can further customize individual applications, like Microsoft Edge, for a more personalized experience. Megan uses the Read Aloud option in Edge to help her study, and after a long day, she likes a bit of extra help.

- [Read Aloud Voice] "The Ability Hacks: The story "of two hackathon teams embracing the transformative power "of technology."

- [Female Narrator] For additional settings and personalized reading experience, Megan uses Reading View, right in her Edge browser session, to break down parts of speech on a webpage. She finds spacing between words helpful to increase reading accuracy. She can increase and decrease the spacing to her satisfaction, as well as increase or decrease the size of the text itself. Similar to how spell check helps you create content without misspellings, Accessibility Checker helps you create content without accessibility issues. Accessibility Checker is no longer hidden in the file backstage, but is discoverable as a Check Accessibility button in the Review tab beside the Proofing Tools, which has increased usage five times. Enhancements in Accessibility Checker not only make it easier to find accessibility issues, but also fix them. The Checker displays accessibility errors, such as images missing alternative text, and the Recommended Actions menu offers suggestions for improvements with a few clicks. A picture speaks 1,000 words, but not to someone who is blind, unless the image contains a written description in a field called alternative text. Using Microsoft's Cognitive Vision Service, Accessibility Checker's Automatic Alt-Text recommended action, analyzes the content of images and automatically suggests a text description. 650 million images have been captioned in a little over a year, since introducing automatic suggestions for alt-text in a Word and PowerPoint for PCs. With one click, Automatic Alt-Text generates a description, and includes a confidence level for the description generation. Low, medium, or high. With this, screen readers can read the image description, and inform people who are blind that the image is present, and the message it is conveying. Some images are purely aesthetic, and do not provide any critical information. If marked as decorative, they will be ignored by the screen reader users.

- Accessibility is important, not only for the, the people who create, consuming the content, but people who're creating the content have a responsibility to create content that's accessible, and Microsoft gives the creators the tools, in Office and Outlook and Office 365, for checking the accessibility of content through the Accessibility Checker.

- And as a person, Jon, who actually works with Office documents, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, at least 90% of the times in my normal day, all the investments that people actually make in using the Accessibility Checker, using these built-in tools to make the accessible, to make the content more accessible, has a profound impact on my productivity.

- Mm, and that's good to know Kenny, because you know, creating accessible content is a shared responsibility. We need to remind ourselves, and remind our colleagues every day, that as we create content, we need to make that content accessible.

- In this section, we're gonna focus on accessibility solutions for hearing. My name is Emmanuele Silanesu, and I'm a member of the accessibility council at Microsoft Australia. I will be joined by Jenny Lay-Flurrie, our chief accessibility officer. For a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, there're a number of things that you can do in order to help the inclusion of them within your meetings, or within the workplace. Microsoft has a number of technologies, whether it be closed captioning, or mono sound, all the way through to live transcription, to help people to be more included within the workplace. These features not only help those people with hearing loss, but it also helps every one of us in different situations. A good example of this might be that you're in a situation like public transport, or in an open work environment, where it's difficult for you to hear, the closed captions keep you focused on the meeting, and the reason that you're online with those people. So, to talk about the lived experience, I've asked Jenny Lay-Flurrie, our global chief accessibility officer, to talk to us about her experience in the workplace.

- Hi there, this is Jenny Lay-Flurrie, chief accessibility officer at Microsoft, and, I'm gonna share a little bit about my journey. So, I was born in Birmingham, England, and my parents are both teachers, and my sister was born with cognitive deafness, my dad developed deafness as he got older, the kind of deafness where he randomly hears things like dinner but doesn't hear things like the washing up, and then I developed measles, and as a result of my measles, I developed first, mild hearing loss, which descended over the next few decades, and I now have severe, profound hearing loss. My hearing in both ears is below 100 decibels. What does that mean for me? It means that I've had to change and adapt over the years. While I was at school, and going pre-18, I was able to use hearing aids, sometimes an FM transmitter or a radio aid, but I was really able to rely mostly on the audible world. My mom did teach me to lip-read. She didn't realize that at the time, but she spent a lot of time investing in my skills of lip-reading, by sitting me in front of mirrors, and copying mouth sounds. That was an invaluable skill that helped me as I hit my 20s, where I had to adapt how I worked with my declining hearing. I couldn't use a mobile phone. And that did cause me several, what I call brick walls. The brick walls that happen when something you had yesterday, you do not have today, and I had to relearn how to work in a world where I couldn't use a phone. That caused me to reach out for help, which took a lot of skill and bravery at the time, and in fact, I went through a process of almost resigning, 'cause I didn't believe I was capable, and ultimately I ended up with digital hearing aids which helped me for a time, and also started using captioning. As I hit my 30s, I again was not able to use those digital hearing aids. I still use them occasionally now today, more to hear my family and particularly my daughter, but really I rely on the non-audible world these days. I use a sign language interpreter, and I rely very heavily on captioning. When that, now, you think about it and you add that into what I do every day, which is about eight hours of meetings a day, there'll calls at night and calls in the morning because of time zone, we're a global company, that means that I do, and am very reliant on both my sign language interpreter, and captioning. Those really are my combination for success. And every day we sit and figure out and we grade what I need to be successful with a meeting. Sometimes, I'm able to wing it, I'm able to go one-on-one with an individual, and because I know them incredibly well, I'm able to communicate just with them. Other times, I will use my sign language interpreter, and other times I will caption. And with captioning, the biggest feature, and the biggest technology that's made the most in my life, are really two things. One, video. Video is probably one of the most important inventions, it's honestly what brought me to Microsoft, was the opportunity to work, back then, 15 years ago, on MSN Messenger and video. It's so important to understand the, the context, and the face, and all the emotion that goes with the words. And two, captioning. And the evolution of AI-delivered accurate captioning in Teams, in PowerPoint, in so many of our products, has been revolutionary for me. Because what they give me, combined, is independence. I love my interpreter, and captions will never replace the need for her, but, sometimes I just wanna be able to call at my convenience, and my time, to make an appointment. I can do that today. And that's all thanks to technology. That said, there's a lot more that needs to happen. There's a lot more opportunity ahead. Still tough to make appointments in the world, whether that's making a doctor's appointment, or it's scheduling something with your child's school, so there's a lot of opportunity for technology to innovate, and people seem to believe that these captions replace interpreters. They don't. Interpreters convey much more than words. They convey meaning, semantics, and context of who's speaking in a room. There's a lot more that I think is gonna happen in this technology space, but I just, here's a quick flavor for you of my world, and any questions, I'm always, always available. You'll find me on social media all the time, and just remember, I'm all ears. Take care.

- Thanks Jenny. Now, let's show you a few of the features that you can use in the Office 365 suite today.

- [Female Narrator] Presentation Translator makes audio content accessible to audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as those who aren't familiar with the presenter's language, or accent, by allowing the presenter to offer live subtitles straight from PowerPoint. The Office add-in, powered by the Microsoft Translator live features, allows Megan to present inclusively in her native language, and have captions appear in real time. As Megan speaks, the add-in displays subtitles in her PowerPoint presentation. Presentation Translator supports speaking in 10 languages, and can translate into more than 60 supported-text language. Customize speech recognition improves caption accuracy by performing a practice run on the content, and studying the speaker notes and slide content to learn technical terms to capture them accurately. Megan can train the translator to adapt to jargon, technical terms, and product or place names. Presentation Translator supports the computer's internal microphone, but a microphone plugged into the computer reduces background noise, allowing the microphone to receive sound directly, improving subtitle accuracy. When the presentation starts, all audience members are muted. An instructional slide explains to the audience how they can view subtitles on their own devices. By using the translate.it URL or the QR code on the opening slide, up to 500 audience members in the room can follow along with the presentation in their own language, including the speaker's language, on their phone, tablet, or computer. As you can see, as I talk, the Translator add-in recognizes my voice, and displays this transcription in real time on the screen for free. It's not perfect, but it's a great option for those who are deaf or hard of hearing to accompany a sign language interpreter, because they can look at the deck, and see the captions at the same time, rather than having to always look at the interpreter. Also, if anyone misses something or gets distracted during the presentation, they can look up and read what they missed. This technology is not just about captioning in real time. It is also used to caption shared videos, recorded meetings, and on-demand events. Microsoft Stream keeps video content accessible by supporting captions and subtitles. When a video is uploaded, Microsoft Stream will automatically generate captions based on what is said in the video. Captions are indexed and used by Microsoft Stream to power deep search, which when coupled with timecodes, allows Megan to quickly find the exact moments in the video that matter most to her. On the playback page, Megan can have the video player render captions, or use the transcript window. Megan can also edit her video transcripts to ensure accuracy of the content. Microsoft Stream is integrated into Microsoft Teams, so Megan can seamlessly add personalized or sourced videos and channels to her team's conversations. Megan can also use Teams for meetings and events across the organization. Because she has global team members, not everyone can attend every meeting. Megan can have the meeting recorded, and have the recordings captioned and transcribed via Stream. This enables everyone to review what was discussed in the meeting at their convenience. She can even do this for on-demand events, like one to many town halls.

- Now for a few tips and tricks, if you are working with somebody who is hard of hearing. First and foremost, make sure that you don't cover up your mouth when you're speaking. Make sure that they are able to see your lips and that they're able to make sense of what you're speaking of, through lip-reading. I know from my own experience with my father, he's profoundly deaf, and he relies on being able to see my mouth. For that perspective, make sure that there's not a lot of background noise, if you're able to find a space, so that you're able to speak with somebody, that they're able to hear you with as much of their own hearing, and then relying on the cues elsewhere. For others like those that use sign language, make sure that you're talking to the person, and not necessarily to the person interpreting with the sign language. The most important thing is to acknowledge the person that you're actually speaking with, not necessarily the interpreter. If you feel that you could benefit from any of the features we've shown you in this video, please reach out to your HR manager, or to IT, as these features are only available in the latest versions of Windows 10 and Office 365. The reason for this is we rely on the power of artificial intelligence, in the cloud, to ensure that you get the absolute best experience. In this section, we are going to focus on accessibility solutions for neurodiversity. We are joined by Jonathan Peach, who is an account executive at Microsoft Australia.

- Neurodiversity is a concept that recognizes and respects neurological differences as any other form of human variation. These can include dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD, the autistic spectrum, and others. I'd encourage you to go and do your own research to find there are different types of variations. Due to having dyslexia at a young age, I struggled with reading and writing in private school. It wasn't until I was able to get outside of a distractive environment that I was able to apply myself in different ways, to improve my reading and writing. Microsoft's mission is to empower everyone, and there are many simple-to-find features in Microsoft services to make it easier to be more productive. One of my favorite features is Focus Assist. We're constantly being inundated by notifications, and we work in noisy offices, and Focus Assist allows you to stay present, so that you can stay in the zone. Now let's look at a few demonstrations that will help you to stay in the zone.

- [Female Narrator] Word supports customizations through Learning Tools in the Immersive group. Megan can adjust the width and color of a document for easier reading. Text Spacing optimizes font spacing to improve reading fluency. This is particularly impactful for people who experience visual crowding, or who have dyslexia. Syllabification breaks long works into manageable syllables. This helps improve work recognition and pronunciation. In Word, Learning Tools are not only available in read mode, but also while editing. As Megan types within her preferred settings, words are spaced, and syllabification generates automatically. The customization is localized to Megan, so when others join to co-author with her, everyone sees their preferred views. This allows everyone to work in a way that meets their needs.

- Now let's take a look at a couple of tips and tricks that could help you in the workplace. If you're in a meeting, provide enough time for someone to ask or answer a question. In some situations, a person who is neurodiverse may not look you directly in the eyes, and that's totally okay. During frenetic times during the day, people may need quiet time, or breaks during a workshop. Provide space for someone to take the time they need to feel comfortable. If you want more information, go and check out Microsoft.com/accessibility.

- In this section, we're gonna focus on accessibility solutions for mental health. I will be joined by Mitch Wallis, the founder and CEO of Heart On My Sleeve, along with Nada Alterisio, our product and marketing manager for the modern workplace. Many of us, if not all of us, at some point in time in our life, suffer from challenges with mental health, or know somebody who is suffering with the challenges of mental health. Technology can be certainly a, a major part of this, and it has a major part to play in helping us as well. Earlier on in the week, I was able to catch up with Mitch Wallis, the founder and CEO of the Heart On My Sleeve foundation, and he was able to share with us some of the insights that he's gotten through his experiences. Many of us, if not all of us, at certain times, feel overwhelmed. We're gonna talk through in this section, some of the assistive technologies, which we have to assist people within the workplace. These technologies can help people whether they have bipolar, anxiety, PTSD, and, ADHD. This however in my opinion is helpful for every single person within the organization. We can all help with minimizing the distractions, focusing on their reading, and improving their concentration. So with us today, I have Mitch Wallis, the CEO of Heart On My Sleeve foundation. Mitch, tell us a little bit about the Heart On My Sleeve Movement.

- Thanks Manny. Yeah, Heart On My Sleeve started after I shared my story on Facebook around the fact that I didn't have this perfect outside life, and then it was actually a big mess on the inside. After working for Microsoft for seven years, my life collapsed around me, and at the end of this video, around where I told my story, I drew a heart on my arm, and I said, "If this helps one person feel less alone, "then my journey's been worth it." And that video ended up going viral and starting a global movement, where people actually tattooed hearts on their arms and came forward and told their story, and now in just over two years, we're a full programs and services organization, working with the likes of Microsoft, KPMG, and a lot of big other companies, helping people to find the inspiration and motivation to truly take a step forward, to go inward and heal a deep wound, not just kinda tread water. And we wanna double the help seeking rate from 35% to 70% in the next five years.

- Mitch, I know, heading on the tech in the program with you, there are a number of different mental health conditions, that at times, it's a matter of duration or a matter of intensity. What do you see within the workplace today with regards to mental health?

- Stigma's still huge. Just, y'know, things are getting better slowly, but there's still a huge baseline that we're coming from, where a lot of people, statistically speaking, would be more hesitant to work with someone who is mentally ill, and be less willing to be managed by someone who is mentally ill, than the general population. Now the problem with that is, is the misconception around what mental health really is. We all have mental health, just like we have physical health. Now that can decay or deteriorate in certain periods of time, into a point of ill health, but even when we are at a state of ill health, there's nothing different to us than anyone else. We all experience anxiety, we all experience depression, we all have these things, the only thing we need to be careful of is how intense, and how long we have those things for. So mental ill health is just the excess occurrence of naturally occurring emotions. And in the workplace, we have a huge responsibility to eliminate that stigma, so that we understand that, we're all human, we all go through hard times, and it's on us to support that employee to maximize their output through the times that they're feeling like they're struggling.

- So Mitch, what can we do to help people in the workplace today?

- I think there are three core things that we can do in the workplace. The first is, prevent people from psychological injury. That means, we need to protect them from being, from feeling worse, or getting aggravated in their condition, as a result of work, whether that be through job control, workload, the environmental conditions, your relationships at work, all these controllable variables that we can have access to, that help people thrive and not become worse off as a result of work. The second thing is, we need to help manage mental illness. That means, upon disclosure, giving people reasonable adjustments, helping people return to work, enabling a culture that helps people not just not get worse, but actually manage the illness in which they might be experiencing so that they can realize their full potential. The third thing is, the workplace is an awesome channel and vehicle to actually promote health, to help people who are healthy become even healthier, whether that be through connection, movement, diet et cetera, we have an amazing vehicle to do that, and so I think preventing harm, managing illness through disclosure, and promoting health where possible are the three core responsibilities of the workplace, but what I do wanna underscore is that the workplace isn't responsible for fixing someone's mental illness. In fact, they don't even need to be part of the solution necessarily, that's a nice to have. The core responsibility of the workplace is to not make someone worse than what they were before they came to you.

- So Mitch, do you have any tips for dealing with mental health in the workplace?

- Absolutely, I think the first and the biggest thing is connection. Fostering a good relationship with your direct manager is such a big determinant of our job satisfaction and our output, and I think the more real conversations we can have, that are truly honest, authentic, and transparent, is gonna benefit us. Now, you don't need to bring your full self to work. For a lot of people that's an overwhelming concept, and for a lot of managers, that's a scary thing to not know their boundaries. Bringing in more of your real self to work is really important. Because there's personal context that we leave at the door that is relevant to our performance every day. So it's not as black and white as we, we slice off the parts that aren't welcome at work and leave them at the door. Or we bring everything in, warts and all. It's, how do we bring more of the things that we're leaving outside into our workplace, so that they can help us work through that and solve that so we get better quicker? You know, less than 5% of people consider leaving their job when they're going through a mental ill health issue. And, and work is shown to be actually a determinant of people getting better quicker. You don't need to be better to come back to work or to stay at work, it's part of the recovery process. But it needs to be done in the right way, and your manager is your biggest determinant for how that breaks down, and so connection and, and community, both with your manager and the staff is the biggest thing. Other things is obviously promoting access to EAP, free psychotherapy for a lot of big companies, particularly at Microsoft, people can call a number anonymously and get access to counseling. The third thing is, helping to eradicate stigma through stories. You know, it's one thing to raise awareness of mental health, it's another to lead by example and actually change behavior, and so we need leaders, role modeling what it means to be healthy at work, and to be vulnerable and human at work too.

- So Mitch, if you were supporting somebody, what would your main tip be for them?

- For sure, listening. I think a lot of us feel like we need to solve someone's problem when they come to us, but mostly what they're looking for is connection, and listening is the greatest way to give someone that validation that they're cared about. It doesn't mean that we can't problem-solve. We absolutely should, even more so if we're in a management position. But problem-solving is more effective once we have a good connection. So I think it's really landing that person, meeting them where they are, and then looking at the ways that we can get that person healthy again, and how we can support that knowing that we have a shared true north, and common goal, that we wanna keep you at work, and we want to help you return to work safely, and in the most efficient way, and when you're all on the same team, that happens, that happens really quickly. That's, the listening for sure is the start of every good conversation.

- So Mitch, what are the programs that you've seen in the workplace that you feel have been effective?

- I think the biggest one is peer support. Research in Australia shows that you're twice as likely to go to a co-worker than you are management or HR when you're suffering from a mental health issue. And so, leaning into that, and empowering our peers to be able to have those conversations is really important. Heart On My Sleeve runs a program called REAL Mates, where we've seen huge success in this area. Leadership literacy is another big one. We need to help managers and leaders be able to have this type of conversation, but also feel empowered about what to do. A lot of managers feel very confused, and as a result they don't wanna enter into it, 'cause they don't wanna make it worse, but what we encourage corporates to do is lean in, and go and find out the information as opposed to trying to say I don't know, and so I won't even approach that topic. And the final thing is, help-seeking behavior with staff. Ultimately, it's our health. And we need to be accountable for our own well-being, and we need to show people the amount of options they have, and the amount of accessibility they have to resources as a result of working for the employer.

- Thanks, Mitch, for coming in and sharing your insights with us. Now, to demonstrate some of the tips and tricks on how we can be more productive and inclusive within the workplace, let me introduce Nada who's gonna take you through some of the features in order to keep us more focused and productive in our daily work.

- Thanks Manny, thanks Mitch. So today I'm going to take you through how technology can help you stay focused, and be very productive. So what you might wanna consider is spending the last hour of every day, and just setting it aside in your calendar, to plan ahead for the next day, and also to clear out your inbox. I feel like spending that time, and investing that time in yourself, can really help set you up for success for the following day. So the way I like to do these is at four o'clock, I will open up my note, and, take a look at my to-do list. And what I'll do is think about what I wanna get done tomorrow. So I might pick three things, because I don't wanna overshoot. So, I would tend to pick one large project, highlight that, maybe do a part of a bigger project, that you'll see here, and then, finally, pick one small thing to do or try to get done the following day. Once I've done that, I tend to go into my inbox, and you'll see here, that I've got nine emails to try to get through and clear out before the next day. I do like to get my inbox down to zero at the end of every day. So, this one up here is about that invoicing. So, one quick tip that I have for you here is, you can actually send that straight into your OneNote, and there it is there. So when I get around to invoicing tomorrow, I actually have the email and all the details right there in the OneNote. Which means that I can now file that email away, and I'm down to eight. Another good tip is if you see something that you know is due next week and you need to set aside some time for it, is, to actually turn it into a calendar item, so set aside the time from now to ensure that you meet the deadline that you have. So, you would just click Set As Calendar, and then set aside the time, maybe allow an hour for that task, and save and close it. Then of course file that away. So just working through all of these, I might also, owe a phone call to somebody, and what I tend to do is make my phone calls while I'm in transit, so, you might consider setting up a task. And this'll just set a reminder for yourself, to make a phone call at nine o'clock while you are driving in, driving into the office. So might just, save and close that. Another great feature is MyAnalytics. This tool can help you understand where you're spending your time, and it, it can actually be very proactive as well and help you organize your schedule, to ensure that you get the best out of your day. So, if you go into MyAnalytics, it tells you, it gives you some insight, so for example, have I spend enough time focusing on my work? Who am I networking with, who am I collaborating with, and how much time am I spending collaborating? Now if I've noticed lately that a lot of meeting requests are creeping into my calendar, and I'm not getting enough focus time, it will even go the next step, and, actually book out some focus time for you in your calendar. So you'll see here that I've asked it to book out some time for me, and it did just that. It booked out two hours, three times next week, where I will get to sit and focus. So it just works through, and does that on your behalf. Some of the features that we've shared with you today are only available on the latest versions of Windows and Office 365. If you do feel like you would benefit from these features, please do reach out to your IT manager, or your HR manager within your organization.

- Thank you for taking the time to watch these videos with us. We know that accessibility is such a large topic, and this is just the start of the conversation. We've got many other features that we weren't able to show you today. We'd recommend, if you wanna find out more information, to head to Microsoft.com/accessibility. We have a Sway which has all of the latest features as they're being released from our engineers. 'Cause every day, week, month, and quarter, they are working to bring new technology to make a more inclusive workplace. Thank you very much, once again, for your time.

- [Male Narrator] Text appears. We believe technology can empower everyone to achieve more. A man uses a wheelchair equipped with a computer.

- [Female Teacher] We have so many pupils who are non-verbal, but still have so much to say.

- [Male Narrator] A young man signs.

- [Translator] I want the exact same information that my hearing friends have.

- [Male Narrator] On a smart phone, speech to translated text.

- [Interpreter] There are barriers to communication everywhere. But I think it's time we look at the barriers as opportunities.

- [Male Narrator] A group wearing T-shirts. Ability, imagine, build, enable.

- [Interpreter] To reach to everyone.

- [Male Narrator] And we're seeing this come to life. A woman with headset and a guide dog. Soundscape.

- Soundscape fills in a lot of the mental map as you move.

- [Soundscape Voice] Approaching intersection.

- [Blind Woman] You can just put it in your pocket and go.

- [Male Narrator] A man uses a wheelchair and computer. Eye Control.

- [Male Teacher] With ALS, you become locked in. But we see technology as a way to give back what ALS has taken away.

- [Male Narrator] Touching icons on a tablet computer. SwiftKey Symbols. Katie Strutt.

- There's no better feeling than to hear a child say something that they've wanted to say and the look on their face after they've been able to say it.

- [Male Narrator] A teacher and student. Learning tools.

- When it's reading, I see spaces between the words.

- [Little Girl] And it's easier to focus on.

- [Mother] Andrzej realized that here was something that could change his life.

- [Male Narrator] AI is opening the door to a new wave of possibilities. A lecture hall, Joseph Adjei. Microsoft Translator.

- [Translator] Now that I have my phone, I can see exactly what was said, and that's been a huge help to me.

- [ASL Translator] The system is learning as it goes, and the accuracy has improved tremendously.

- [Male Narrator] Gary Behm.

- [Interpreter] Students can pick any language that they choose to receive the information. It's like we jumped into the future.

- [Male Narrator] Amanda Bui.

- [Amanda] Because, communication's very important for all of us, and we just wanna be together, and,

- A woman signs.

- not feel left out.

- [Male Narrator] A man with dowels and round slots. Helpicto. Carine Mantoulan. To help autistic individuals communicate, we use images. Arthur's mother. I say something to Arthur, and the Helpicto app converts this instantly into pictograms, and then repeats it as a voice command. Go get dressed, and brush your teeth. We can go back to having a more spontaneous communication. I think it really helps build relationships. A family portrait. Seeing AI. Eric Bridges.

- Both my wife and I are totally blind, and we have a three-year-old son that's in preschool. He can see, but, his parents can't, so, to be able to know what goin' on at his school is everything. The Seeing AI app has the ability to allow me access to the visual world. Artificial intelligence is beginning to have an impact on the lives of people with disabilities, but it's, it's only going to grow. There is still so much out there to be done.

- [Male Narrator] And we are just getting started. Let's see what you can do. AI for Accessibility. Microsoft. Microsoft.com/AIforAccessibility.

- [Wayne] If you'd like to ask a question, we're online waiting to answer. Please type your questions into the Q&A panel in the webinar, and we will respond. Alternatively, if you've got any other questions, from Microsoft, you can email our enterprise Disability Answer Desk, at E-D-A-D, @microsoft.com. That concludes today's webinar. Thank you for participating.