Celebrating Diversity in Disability: Preparing for an Audio/Visual Project

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BACKGROUND
- A lack of awareness and empathy affect the attitudes and behaviors toward people with disabilities in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- This project was done in preparation for an audio/visual project that will educate the public about disability etiquette and promote empathy and inclusion.

OBJECTIVES
Questions explored by LEND for VIUCEDD include:
- What common attitudes, barriers, and misconceptions exist in the US Virgin Islands towards people with disabilities?
- What avenues for audio-visual formatting and delivery work best for educating on disability for the purpose of inclusivity, awareness, and empathy?
- What methods for storytelling are most effective for creating empathy/compassion/awareness for disability? What messaging and talking points should the documentary interviewees be asked to focus on?

METHODS
- Research methods that were utilized during this evidenced-based research includes scholarly articles, qualitative research, professional interviews with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as parents of children who has disabilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

RESULTS / PROGRESS TO DATE
- The USVI community demonstrates pragmatic understanding of how to treat people with disabilities, but practical actions do not match their understanding.
- Research shows that animation is effective for raising awareness and providing valuable information about sensitive topics related to disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Use animation in a documentary styled format to promote and market empathy
- Interview people with disabilities, family members of people with disabilities, caregivers, and disability professionals
- Present educational information about various types of disabilities including intellectual disabilities and documentary interview styles
- Provide varied language formatting (example: Spanish)
- Create accessible formatting for viewers with visual and auditory disabilities
- Disability awareness training for the Audio/Visual team, including the art director and the videographers