

National Collaborative on Faith and Disability Webinar Series

## Honoring Spiritual Needs and Gifts:

**From Inertia to Collaborative Action by Providers and Congregations**  
January 26, 2015

A webinar series hosted by:  
National Collaborative on Faith and Disability [www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org)  
AAIDD Religion & Spirituality Division [www.aaidreligion.org](http://www.aaidreligion.org)

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## Including Spirituality in Assessment, Evaluation, and Person-Centered Planning Processes

Presenters:

**Catherine Patterson** (*Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, New York State*)  
**Lida Merrill** (*Heritage Christian Services*)  
**Rick Benjamin** (*Hope Community Resources*)

Hosts:

**Erik Carter** and **Courtney Taylor** (*Vanderbilt University*)

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### Also Supported By:

- Autism Society of America
- Parent to Parent
- The Bethesda Institute
- The Arc US
- ANCOR
- Vanderbilt Kennedy University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

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### A Few Important Notes

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted soon on the Collaborative on Faith and Disability website ([www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org)).
- All slides, mentioned resources, and several helpful links will also be posted along with the webinar recording.
- Questions can be submitted in the chat box for discussion after the presentations.
- We will read posted questions to the presenters during the Q&A. All phone lines are silenced.
- Our time is brief and so will the presenters.
- Information about upcoming webinars and the Collaborative on Faith and Disability will be shared at the end of the webinar.

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## SETTING THE STAGE

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Learning to Listen to What Matters Most

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## A Focus on Flourishing

- A meaningful job
- A safe and comfortable place to live
- Strong community connections
- Enduring friendships
- Access to high-quality education
- Opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others
- A strong support system
- Good health
- Intimate relationships
- Opportunities to worship, learn, and serve, and fellowship alongside others within a community of faith

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## AAIDD and The Arc: Joint Position

**POSITION STATEMENT**

People with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities have the right to choose their own expressions of spirituality, to practice those beliefs and expressions, and to participate in the religious community of their choice or other spiritual activities. The person also has a right to choose not to participate in religious or spiritual activity.

**ISSUES**

While many religious leaders often help people with disabilities, individuals are often excluded from religious activities even though they are capable of participating in religious activities. This exclusion is often based on stereotypes and misconceptions about people with disabilities and their abilities. This exclusion is often based on stereotypes and misconceptions about people with disabilities and their abilities.

**POSITION**

Spirituality, spiritual growth, and religious expression that respect a person's history, tradition, and current preference or choice are rights that should be honored by supports from service systems and religious communities, as should the choice not to participate.

- Spirituality is an important part of human experience that may be expressed both through religious practice and through expressions of personal meaning and values. Thus spirituality and religious preference should be part of all assessments of individual and family needs, interests, and strengths.
- Faith communities should receive assistance to build their capacity to support and welcome our constituents and their families, through partnerships with provider agencies and advocacy organizations that respect and honor spiritual needs and religious preferences.
- Agencies and spiritual communities should offer training and education regarding spiritual supports for people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities.




<http://aaidd.org/news-policy/policy/position-statements/spirituality>

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## TASH




**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The rights, needs and wants of many individuals with disabilities, including the basic need for freedom of spiritual expression, have been denied consistently. Many people with disabilities experience limited opportunities for spiritual expression. Especially acute is the denial of opportunities and supports related to spiritual exploration and expression for those who live in institutional and other restrictive settings.

**RATIONALE**

Faith and spirituality may offer positive supports to people with disabilities, as they do for others in our communities. Because we firmly maintain that an individual's spiritual beliefs could be representative of an entire array of beliefs, definitions, expressions, and faith communities, TASH supports a range of expressions of spirituality that communicate value and respect for all individuals. The Spirituality Committee of TASH exists to support various spiritual issues of people with disabilities but does not advance any specific faith or religion. TASH supports opportunities for spiritual expression for individuals with disabilities, both privately and in community.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT TASH**, an international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates and people who work in the disability field, believes that all people with disabilities have the right to spiritual expression including the reflection upon and sharing of spiritual purposes for their lives. TASH further supports the right of individuals with disabilities to participate in spiritual expression or organized religion as they so choose and promotes the provision of any and all supports needed by people with disabilities to so participate.

[https://ccids.umaine.edu/files/2012/12/TASH\\_Connections\\_Spirituality\\_Winter\\_2012.pdf](https://ccids.umaine.edu/files/2012/12/TASH_Connections_Spirituality_Winter_2012.pdf)



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### ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN A FAITH COMMUNITY OF THEIR CHOICE

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Rev. Catherine Patterson  
*Faith Based Initiative Coordinator*  
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### SPIRITUAL INDICATOR GUIDE

An Assessment Tool

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### GOAL

To educate individuals involved in planning and supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to develop sustainable opportunities to become valuable members in their faith community.

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### PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

- Explore an individual's spiritual/religious/faith interest.
- Support faith inclusion as a valued outcome in the ISP.
- Encourage team planning to enhance faith community participation.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Module 1: Defining Spirituality
- Module 2: Exploring an Individual's Spirituality

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- Module 3: Faith Community and Other Social Connections
- Module 4: Understanding Your Connection with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- Module 5: Creating a Spiritual Inclusion Plan

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- Accessibility Information
- Partnerships for Supporting Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- References
- Contact Information

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**I. Memory Stimulation**

**SYMBOLS AND PICTURES OF INTEREST INDICATORS**

Pictures of religious activity may trigger a memory response from individuals to help with gathering historical information.



**Catholic Indicators**



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**Judaism Indicators**



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**Protestant Indicators**



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**Islamic Indicators**



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**II. Gathering Information**


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**II. QUESTIONNAIRES**

- To Individuals
- To Family Members
- To Friends
- To Service Providers

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**III. Connecting with Houses of Worship**

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...Connecting people with developmental disabilities to congregation is an excellent way to support people’s right to spiritual expression, help them meet their spiritual needs, and enhance community inclusion.

Adapted from PROTECTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: THE CAREGIVER’S RESPONSIBILITY, by Thomas B. Hoeksema, PH.D. Calvin College, April 1994

- National Collaborative on Faith and Disability Webinar Series
- OPWDD WEBSITE INFORMATION**
- NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities: <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/>
  - Faith Based Initiative: [http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd\\_community\\_connections/faith\\_based\\_initiatives](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_community_connections/faith_based_initiatives)
  - Spiritual Indicator Guide [http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd\\_community\\_connections/faith\\_based\\_initiatives/training\\_material](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_community_connections/faith_based_initiatives/training_material)

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**WE HELP PEOPLE WITH  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
LIVE RICHER LIVES**



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## SERVING PEOPLE HOLISTICALLY

Lida Merrill, M.Th.

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*Heritage Christian Services*

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**HERITAGE**  
CHRISTIAN SERVICES

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### In the beginning...

- Years of planning (before Heritage Christian Services opened the first community-based residential home) created a holistic service delivery model that focuses on individual opportunities for physical, emotional and spiritual growth.

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### Tools for Holistic Person-Centered Living and Planning

- Supportive culture
- Spiritual Life Plans
- ISP Process
- Quest for natural supports
- Personal Outcome Measure (POM) interview and written summary
- My Action Plan
- Individual Satisfaction Questionnaire



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## Supportive Culture

- Our mission statement references each “individual’s gifts, strengths and needs.”
- Annual conversation with each department about how the words of the mission statement ‘become alive’ at their site
- Champions
- Story-Telling

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## Spiritual Life Plan

- Individualized plan created with each person who receives residential services; updated as needed
- Incorporated into new employee training
  - Questionnaire format with input from individual, family and staff
  - Identifying information
  - Faith-community attendance and participation
  - Spiritual gifts and strengths
  - Personal practice
  - Spiritual companionship
  - Spiritual encouragement
  - End of life planning (optional)

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## ISP Process &amp; Natural Supports

- Annually agency Medicaid Service Coordinators and brokers attend an in-service regarding our agency mission statement; incorporated into this conversation is the role of local faith-communities as places of welcome and for the development of natural supports.
- During ISP development faith-communities are considered for natural supports and possible employment networking.
- At the initial intake meeting the discussion includes faith-community background and involvement.
- The ISP is linked to the Personal Outcome Measure written summary.

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## Personal Outcome Measure

- Personal Outcome Measure (POM) interview incorporates several questions related to spirituality and faith.
- The written summary includes a Spirituality Section.
- The person who was interviewed, the program manager and the person’s service coordinator receive a copy of the POM summary for discussion and valued outcome development.

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**My Action Plan**

- The personal valued outcomes that the person wants to accomplish in the next few months and the actions he/she will take to achieve them
- The 'actions' belong to the person, not to her/his support team: My Action Plan is about my actions not someone else's actions
- Focuses on questions raised in the POM and ISP process that relate to "What will make my life better"?
- The person owns the plan and the supports that will be required.

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**Individual Satisfaction Survey**

- Annual survey of each person who receives residential or day habilitation services.
- Purpose of survey is to measure levels of satisfaction, not development of individualized plans.
- Includes a question regarding satisfaction with present spiritual supports.

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**Gene's Story: He speaks and people listen**

- Had no current faith-community but a strong childhood history of church attendance; he requested assistance to find a church.
- Friend's invited Gene to attend their church; he did and felt welcomed.
- After a year of regular attendance he advocated for himself to become a deacon at the church; he was unanimously elected. No one told him he could not become a deacon.
- He has the ability to see through distracting arguments and get right to the point- a valued gift that had been missing from the vestry before he joined them.
- He is highly valued by his faith-community.

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**Suzy's Story: She serves and people embrace her**

- Joined a church near her group home.
- She annually leads the church effort to provide Christmas food and presents for single-mothers in the congregation.
- Suzy desired to move to her own home, a non-certified home with her sister.
- Before she moved Suzy independently made plans with her church for a ride to church each Sunday.
- The natural supports of her church empower her independence.

### Resources

- Anything written or recommended by Bill Gaventa!
- Writings of Dr. Jeff McNair
- Joni and Friends
- DisAbility Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church
- Key Ministries
- Summer Institute on Theology and Disability
- Christian Reformed Church: Disability Concerns
- Chabad.org

### INCLUDING SPIRITUALITY IN PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

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*Director of Spirituality*  
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To support the whole person, we must support their spirituality.

Person-centered planning must include planning for spirituality.

### Service Provider Questions

- What does it even look like to support someone in exploring and expressing their spirituality?
- How do I discover what brings meaning, joy and inspiration to a person's life, especially someone who has difficulty communicating in the usual ways?
- Is this even my role?

Dr. Erik Carter, used by permission

### Service Provider Barriers

- I never really thought about it.
- It is not relevant to this population of people.
- It is not my responsibility to address it.
- I do not have time to address it.
- I feel uncomfortable addressing it.
- I am not permitted to address it.

Dr. Erik Carter, used by permission

### What some of our Care Coordinators have said:

- "...this should always be a question asked during the Plan of Care meeting."
- "...it seems that the family is more concerned about their spiritual well-being than the participant..."
- "...most all of my clients do not choose to partake and people often look ashamed that I am asking..."
- "I do ask spirituality questions in more roundabout ways."
- "I don't think I have a good handle on having a good conversation on exploring people's spirituality."

### Be ready for different responses.

- No interest
- Exploring
- Connecting
- Maintaining
- Deepening
- Changing

Dr. Erik Carter, used by permission

### Our Plan of Care Document

Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS) Plan of Care (POC)  
 Legal Name (Last, First):  
 CCAN#: POC Start Date: POC End Date:

**SECTION III - Personal Profile**  
 Write a summary of the participant that addresses the areas specified below. Include in your summary a discussion of functional abilities and/or medical needs identified in the assessments you list below.

- Areas to be addressed**
- Summary of life situation, home environment & relationships
  - Summary of progress toward previous goals & objectives
  - Desirable future outcomes
  - Social Environment to include friends, hobbies, favorite activities, place, spiritual/cultural preferences, etc.
  - Functional abilities, strengths, limitations, &/or obstacles
  - What works and does not work
  - Critical behaviors and their interventions
  - Any additional information that could impact the level, or type, of requested service

**Assessments Reviewed**  
 List all assessments completed and reviewed in this planning process including source:

### Spiritual Goals and Objectives

- Jane will attend church once a week.
- Joe will have a prayer time every day.
- John will serve in his faith community once a month.
- With staff support, Janet will take a walk outside once a week.
- Once a month Mary will connect with people from her village of origin.

### Our Annual Release and Consent Authorization

Spiritual/Religious Preference: (Please check one)

- I consent to participate in any spiritual or religious activities with other residents of Hope Community Resources, Inc.

Yes\_ No\_

- I consent to participate in spiritual or religious activities, with the following exceptions: \_\_\_\_\_
- I choose to participate ONLY in the following spiritual or religious activities: \_\_\_\_\_
- I do not wish to participate in any spiritual or religious activities.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently about 50% of our Plans of Care include faith and spirituality.

### Suggestions

- Include faith and spirituality in planning documents and checklists.
- Do regular trainings in supporting spirituality.
- Be part of person-centered planning teams.
- Affirm planners when they do include faith and spirituality.

### Spirituality is also about...

- Quality of life
- Community-based services
- Person-centered planning
- Natural supports
- Wellness

Paraphrase with terms like these to help include spirituality in person-centered planning.

### You must have support from the top.

To include spirituality in person-centered planning, faith and spirituality must be accepted and supported in the organizational culture.

- Board
- Executive director
- Directors

### Q&A WITH THE SPEAKERS

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Please post your questions in the chat box

### NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON FAITH AND DISABILITY

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[www.faithanddisability.org](http://www.faithanddisability.org)

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## Vision and Mission

People with disabilities and their families will have compelling opportunities and supports to develop and express their spirituality, engage in congregational life, and share their gifts and talents in ways that are personally valued and that strengthen communities.

Our mission is to support people with disabilities, their families, and those who support them by providing national and international leadership in the areas of research, education, service, and dissemination related to disability, religion, and inclusive supports.

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## Current UCEDD Partners

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## Activities of the Collaborative

- ✓ Develop and support an interdisciplinary and interfaith network of scholars and leaders who are addressing the intersection of disability, religion, and/or spirituality in their work.
- ✓ Foster rigorous, collaborative, and interdisciplinary scholarship, including research, policy analyses, theological reflection, and program evaluations.
- ✓ Develop educational materials, programs, and technical assistance fostering collaboration among, or building the capacity of, religious leaders, human service professionals, service providers, congregations, individuals with disabilities, and families to address spirituality and build inclusive spiritual supports.
- ✓ Produce and disseminate compelling resources based on research and state-of-the-art practice in both disability services and inclusive spiritual supports.
- ✓ Provide national and international leadership by speaking to policy initiatives, cultural developments, and other emerging issues related to disabilities, religion, and spirituality.
- ✓ Serve as a central and visible "clearinghouse" for resources, research, trainings, conferences, programs, and organizations.
- ✓ Provide an accessible and engaging link between academic, professional, and lay communities.
- ✓ Support and enhance the efforts of other organizations, faith networks, and groups carrying out work in related areas.
- ✓ Pursue large-scale funding to carry out the work of the Collaborative.

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## Upcoming Webinar Conversations

- **February 23:** *Creative strategies by provider and service organizations in addressing spiritual needs and choices*
- **March 30:** *Congregational strategies for reaching out to agencies and working with them to identify and honor spiritual supports and enable inclusion and ongoing participation*
- **April 27:** *Strategies for congregations to use in building awareness and commitment within congregations*
- **June 29:** *Best practices and resources for moving from inclusion to belonging as contributing, valued members of faith communities*
- Register at [www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org)