

National Collaborative on Faith and Disability Webinar Series

Honoring Spiritual Needs and Gifts:

From Inertia to Collaborative Action by Providers and Congregations

June 29, 2015

A webinar series hosted by:

National Collaborative on Faith and Disability (faithanddisability.org)

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Moving From Inclusion to Belonging

Moderator:

Bill Gaventa, M.Div.

National Collaborative on Faith and Disability (faithanddisability.org)

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Also Supported By:

- Autism Society of America
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- The Arc US
- Association of University Centers on Disability
- ANCOR
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A Few Important Notes

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted this week on the Collaborative on Faith and Disability website (faithanddisability.org).
- All slides and resources will be posted along with the webinar recording.
- Questions can be submitted in the question box for discussion after the presentations.
- We will read posted questions to the presenters during the Q&A at the end of the presentation. All phone lines are silenced.
- Our time is brief. Presenters will share contact information for follow-up.
- Information about the National Collaborative on Faith and Disability will be shared at the end of the webinar.

INTRODUCTION

Bill Gaventa, M.Div. (Moderator)

*Chair/Coordinator, National Collaborative on Faith and Disability
Coordinator of The Summer Institute on Theology and Disability
Email: bill.gaventa@gmail.com*

From Inclusion to Belonging

- Webinar series started with ways that service providers can begin to address and include the spiritual needs and gifts of the people they support in assessment and person centered planning processes.
- Then, we noted creative strategies that some providers are using to put those plans into action.
- Followed by a session on creative strategies by congregations wanting to work collaboratively with provider agencies.

From Inclusion to Belonging

- The fourth webinar in this series explored ways that faith communities are building awareness and commitment within their own congregations.
- Today...What's beyond accessibility, accommodations and inclusion?

Belonging

- From "apart from" community to "a part of," where people "take part" and are "given parts."
- From stranger to participant to member.
- From being noticed but unknown to being known well.
- From being welcomed to being missed.
- From receiving care and support to contributing time, talents and gifts.

Name a support: someone is doing it

- Many creative strategies and resources being developed around North America.
- Today, we will hear from four voices:
 - Cindy Merten, First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, MI.
 - Neil Cudney, Christian Horizons, Ontario, Canada
 - Anne Masters, the Archdiocese of Newark
 - Deborah Fisher, Consultant, formerly with Jewish Foundation for Group Homes in the Washington, D. C. Area.

BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES FOR MOVING FROM INCLUSION TO BELONGING AS CONTRIBUTING, VALUED MEMBERS OF FAITH COMMUNITIES

Cindy Merten, M.Ed.

*Director of Christian Education & All Abilities Inclusion Ministries
 First Presbyterian Church Birmingham
 Co-Moderator of Presbyterians for Disability Concerns
 Website: Everybodyschurch.org, presbyterianmission.org
 Email: cindymerten@fpcbirmingham.org*

A Journey of Prepositions

Ministry Apart Ministry By

Ministry Among

Ministry With Ministry To

-Bill Gaventa

Recognize, Receive & Affirm

- Recognize that all people have gifts to offer
- Provide opportunities to receive those gifts
- Affirm them in worship and beyond

Inquire, listen and follow up

Ask how they want to participate in worship, educational programming, choirs, mission projects, church committees/boards, and **plan together** to make it happen.

Listen to the needs and find ways to adapt and accommodate. Provide an opportunity to see the organ up close, learn how it works, and even play it.

Presenting problem: One of our children loved to sing and wanted to sing in the choir but the sound of the organ caused her to cry and overwhelmed her.

The Plan: Provided an opportunity to see the organ up close, learn how it works, and even play it.

Provided extra support when needed in choir and other activities of the church.



Ways to "take part" or be "given parts" in worship

- Ushers – provide nametags
- Train a children's team of ushers
- Light candles in worship
- Greeters – a "permanent" greeter
- Families of all types serve as liturgists at least once/month



Strategies to share leadership

- 1.Rejoicing Spirits: Participate in a dramatic re-enactment of the scripture with congregational participation when possible.
- 2.Provide musical instruments for all who want them.
- 3.Meet and greet, light a candle, pass out musical instruments.
- 4.Serve as a sighted guide for a worship leader.
- 5.At each service three people participate in a ritual we call "Setting the Table of Community."
- 6.Set tables for dinner following the service, and/or help serve the meal.



Musical instruments for all



We use drums, shakers, tambourines, and chimes for everyone with sound reduction headphones available. Sometimes we use colored scarves and other props to increase group participation.

Signing and motions



God Calls Us To Trust

Join us for our REJOICING SPIRITS no-shush service this Sunday at 5pm.

Please stay for a simple meal following the service!

Musical instruments for all and noise reduction earphones are available for all.

Provide a way for more people to participate and share their variety of gifts. Using hand over hand motions or modeling motions helps us to pray with our whole selves.

Intergenerational events build community & belonging



We know we belong when we are missed. Presence raises awareness, creates understanding, builds relationships which overcome uncertainty and fear.

Better Together: Everyone at the table



- Worship rituals and liturgy are for people of all ages and abilities.
- Social stories and videos <http://www.fpcbirmingham.org/sacraments-videos.html>

Collaborations and Advocacy

- Train youth in understanding various disabilities
- Work with area agencies to provide spiritual care
- Participate in school IEPs when invited
- Provide job training
- Write grants

Setting the Table of Community

This is the Bible. It has stories of how much God loves us and helps us. As we learn to see God in these stories we can learn to see God in our lives.

"We are bringing in the Word of God"



Setting the Table of Community

This is the light, reminding us that Jesus is the light of the world. Showing us that God wants us to love each other like Jesus loves us.

"We are bringing in the Light of God."



Setting the Table of Community

This is the offering plate, reminding us that God wants us to share; Reminding us of the many treasures that God has given us, and that when we share we make everything so much better for everyone.

"We are bringing in the Gifts of God"



When we honor, value, & affirm everyone's gifts our faith communities are transformed, and we encounter holy moments like this one.



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Resources

- Creating a Culture of Inclusion: a video study resource to guide conversations about including people of all abilities in the life of a faith community. www.fpcbirmingham.org/inclusion-videos.html.
- FPCB mission statement: As Everybody's Church we commit ourselves to serve Christ by cultivating mission, inclusion and community.
- Rejoicing Spirits is an innovative ministry that works to enrich the faith lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and friends and other supportive community members. www.rejoicingspirits.org.
- Resources, support and coaching to help congregations include people with disabilities as active and valued members. Congregations partner with people with disabilities and their support systems to explore faith using the Rejoicing Spirits ministry model.
- A short video of a Rejoicing Spirits worship service is also available at www.fpcbirmingham.org/inclusion-videos.html.
- [Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities](#) by Erik Carter
- Presbyterians for Disability Concerns welcomes those who affirm, support and advocate for the gifts, rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities in the total life of the church. Resource packets to help congregations become authentic circles of inclusion are written each year. www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/presbyterians-disability-concerns/

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Resources

- *Better Together: Transformed by God's Variety of Gifts* is a new training curriculum developed by members of Presbyterians for Disability Concerns. http://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/phewa/docs/pdc-better_together-final_version-050715.pdf
- Resource for a communion liturgy that includes children and videos that are examples of a social story for communion <http://www.fpcbirmingham.org/sacraments-videos.html>

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THE ROLE AGENCIES PLAY

Neil Cudney, D.Min.
 Director of Organizational and Spiritual Life
 Christian Horizons
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 Email: ncudney@christian-horizons.org

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NATURAL PLACES OF BELONGING

Faith and Culture play a vital role in people's life cycle. The traditions, rituals and rhythms bring constancy, comfort, relationships, meaning, belonging and support. It is important for us to note that our role (ie: DSP) with the person supported may be transitory, while faith and culture communities (and families) remain rather constant. As agencies and direct support professionals it is critical that we see our roles as facilitators into the faith, cultural and familial life cycles and rhythms of the people we support.

It is essential that as agencies we discover and support pathways into faith communities in order to facilitate opportunities for these long lasting relationships to develop.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Social inclusion is the result of complex interactions between environmental and personal characteristics that allow a person to assume meaningful social roles which respect his or her personal [choices](#), needs and expectations. For social inclusion to be successful, the person must be recognized and trusted as playing these roles in the community and must [belong](#) to a social network.

MAPS Multidimensional Assessment of Providers and Systems

ALMOST FRIENDS

A California research project concluded that in social service/agency settings a significant percentage of persons receiving group living supports only entertain a friend in their home once every 18 months in that State.

Joint research project National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation and California Baptist University
Article: Almost Friends From the Journal of the Christian Institute on Disability (JCID) Vol.2, No.1, Spring/Summer 2013

ALMOST FRIENDS

That same research project concluded that 77% of supporting staff had little or no training in building effective and sustainable relationships with faith and culture communities.

The same could likely be said of faith communities.

Joint research project National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation and California Baptist University
Article: Almost Friends From the Journal of the Christian Institute on Disability (JCID) Vol.2, No.1, Spring/Summer 2013

WHERE ARE THE PLACES OF BELONGING?

Current (yet to published) Study:

Early analyses of data collected across more than 20 states and 12,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities suggests that those individuals who are involved in faith community may have more friends and caring relationships with people other than support staff and family members than individuals who do not have such involvement.

MAPS Multidimensional Assessment of Providers and Systems

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BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF BELONGING

What are some the unintentional barriers agencies create?

- Undervalue the importance that faith has and means in the lives of people supported
- Undervalue the contribution and opportunities faith communities can provide to persons supported
- Little or no training and support to staff for faith community engagement
- Staff Schedules on weekends
- Little opportunity for persons supported to explore places of worship their own choosing
- Don't understand or take the time to understand the language and challenges of faith communities

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BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF BELONGING

What are some the unintentional barriers faith communities create?

- They can be hard and difficult to approach
- Undervalue the importance faith and community in the lives of people supported
- Little or no training and support in faith communities to engage community agencies
- Fear – so defer to agencies to provide support
- Little opportunity for persons supported to explore places of faith and engagement within their community
- Don't understand or take the time to understand the language and challenges of agencies
- Segregation of programs and engagement

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AGENCY CONSIDERATIONS

- Agencies and DSP need to be aware of their own potential biases and equipped to support the person (and/or their advocate) to dictate the practices and opportunities of that faith or cultural expression in that faith community.
- Agencies need to explore how to support persons of faith within their supported communities. How can the spiritual rhythms, practices and expressions of the person be best supported.
- That faith communities can be valuable and long-term partners in supportive care.
- How can agencies and DPS be more welcoming of and inviting faith communities to participate in the conversation

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AGENCY CONSIDERATIONS

- Lunch and Learn for Faith community leaders
- Proactive training and support for the AODA
 - *Accessibilities for Ontarian's Act*
- Yearly Belonging Conference with Faith Communities.
- Working with Colleges and Seminaries to encourage and help provide course/seminars/lectures on including persons with disabilities in faith communities
- Building a tool kit of resources/video/ideas to offer to churches

SOME CHRISTIAN HORIZONS EXAMPLES

- ❑ Working with our local Faith and Culture Inclusion Network
- ❑ Ensuring that Faith and Culture considerations are meaningful parts of PCS
- ❑ Partnering with:
 - ✓ groups/organizations/UCEDS ie:
 - ✓ Faith and Culture Networks
 - ✓ Summer Institute on Theology of Disability;
 - ✓ Putting Faith to Work;
 - ✓ AAIDD Division of Religion and Spirituality.
- ❑ Participation in Government and community partnership tables and reminding of the importance and need for faith and culture inclusion in planning and policy

PARTICIPATION: THE BEGINNING OF BELONGING

Anne Masters, M.A.

Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities for Archdiocese of Newark
 Catholic Charities
 Website: www.rcan.org/disabilitites
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Being together, each person is experienced to be part of the community



Prayer, Worship & Participation: Skills to be learned



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Ben: Becoming Part of a Faith Community



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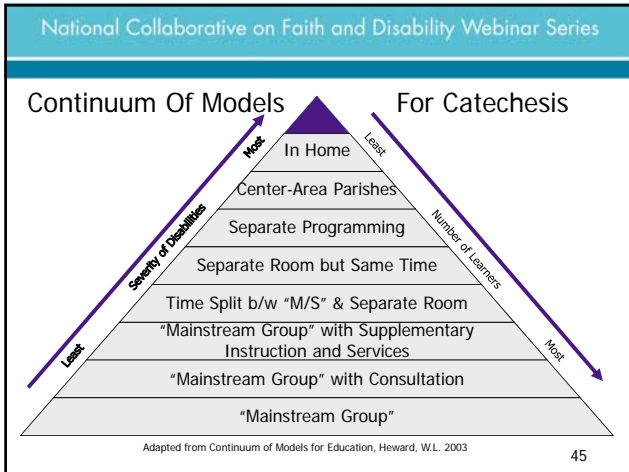


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Simplify Focus

- Across ALL Abilities and Spectrum
- COMMUNICATION and BEHAVIOR are critical considerations for learning
- BEGIN with the PERSON/FAMILY IN FRONT OF YOU

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Respect...

- ...the ability and needs of people with disabilities
- ...that each person/family will have different goals and needs
- ...that each person/family will have different desires for involvement
- ... the privacy of each person and family

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Resource List

Carter, Erik. W. **Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A guide for Service Providers, Families & Congregations.** Baltimore, London, Sydney: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2007.

Carter, Erik. W., Lisa S. Cushing, Craig H. Kennedy. **Peer Support Strategies for Improving All Students' Social Lives and Learning.** Baltimore, London, Sydney: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co, 2009.

Catalano, Corinne G., MA, Purnima Rathi Hernandez, DDS, MA, Patty Wolters, COTA, "Who am I? A Child's Self-Statement," *Exceptional Parent Magazine*, April 2002, 60-65.

Foley, Edward, Herbert Anderson, Dianne Bergant, & Mark Francis. **Developmental Disabilities and Sacramental Access: New Paradigms for Sacramental Encounters.** Health Policy Advisory Center: May 1994.

Groome, Thomas H. **Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry.** Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998.

Kluth, Paula. **"You're Going to Love This Kid!" Teaching Students with Autism in the Inclusive Classroom.** Baltimore, London, Sydney: PAUL H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2003.

Keating, Christina & Tracey. **Climbing Asperger Mountain: Learning About Living With Asperger's Syndrome.** Amazon, Kindle eBook, 2014.

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Masters, Anne. **Pastoral Ministry WITH Persons WITH Disabilities**. Newark, NJ: Advocate Publishing Corp, 2013. www.rcan.org/disabilities

Maurice, Catherine, ed. Gina Green & Stephen C. Luce, co-ed. **Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism: A Manual for Parents and Professionals**. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, 1996.

Newman, Barbara J. **Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities**. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2001.

_____. **Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders**. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2006. Revised and updated. Grand Rapids, MI: Friendship Ministries, 2011.

Pierson, Jim. **Exceptional Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students with Disabilities**. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 2002.

Rothschild, J., Reeve, S., Progar, Pl, & Meyer, L. **Teaching children with autism spectrum disorders to attend church** (unpublished master's thesis). Caldwell College, Caldwell NJ, 2010.

PRAISE Professional Executive Advisory Board

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Resource List

NCPD Resources
 Benton, Janice La Londe and Mary Jane Owen, ed. **Opening Doors to People with Disabilities: The Resource File, Books A & B**. Washington, DC: National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities, 1997. www.ncpd.org. 202-520-2933.

Welcoming Parishioners with Disabilities. Washington, DC: National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities, 2003.

USCCB Documents and Resources
Opening Doors of Welcome and Justice to Parishioners with Disabilities: A Parish Resource Guide. No. 5-604, 48 pp.

Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities, 1978, rev. 1989, "Pastoral Statement." No. 5-424.

Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities: A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1998, "Welcome and Justice." No. 5-311.

National Directory for Catechesis. USCCB, 2005.

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MOVING FROM INCLUSION TO BELONGING: EXAMPLES FROM A PROVIDER AND SYNAGOGUE IN THE WASHINGTON, DC METROPOLITAN AREA

Deborah M. Fisher
 Strategic Change Consultant
 Jewish Foundation for Group Homes
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Providers

Opportunities

- Outreach to Congregations
 - Sabbath and Holiday Observances
 - Attend Friday evening and Saturday morning services
 - For festive holidays like Hanukkah or Purim, synagogue groups make parties, bring gifts
 - Invitations to congregational events
 - Join in synagogue Sabbath meals, Passover seders, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur (High Holiday) services



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Providers-continued

- Provide opportunities for individuals to have Bar or Bat Mitzvahs at either the synagogue their families attend or ones with which agency has relationships
- Congregants are invited to visit group homes for Sabbath or holiday meals
- Families invite individuals to their homes for Sabbath or holiday meals

And then.....relationships begin.....

- Story of Hannah



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Congregations

Opportunities

- Education
 - Pre-school
 - Religious School
 - Bar and Bat Mitzvah
 - Youth Groups
- Religious Practices
 - Participation in services
 - Story of Betty
 - Story of Henry
 - Ritual bath



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Congregations-continued

Inclusion Task Force

- Promoting meaningful participation for all who seek it. Resource to congregations.
- Members are people with disabilities, family members, congregants, staff liaison.
- Train staff in appropriate responses to behavioral challenges.
- Ensure security officers are properly trained to respond to behavioral challenges.



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Congregations-continued

Challenges

- Create truly inclusive educational opportunities
- Promote social inclusion for all ages
- Create low sensory services or rooms through which those who need it may participate
- Ability to respond to range of disabilities



Individuals and Families

- Advocate
- Educate
- Collaborate



Selected Resources

- Hineinu: a collaboration of disability professionals, activists, and policy experts from the Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist and Reform Jewish Movements designed to increase disability inclusion in our synagogues for people of all abilities.
- Chabad: Friendship Circles
- Orthodox: Yachad, The National Jewish Council for Disabilities
- Reform Movement: Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
- Conservative Movement: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 - Ruderman Inclusion Action
 - Camp Ramah Tikvah Program

Resources-continued

- Shelly Christensen, MA: *Jewish Community Guide to Inclusion of People with Disabilities*, 2008
- Sara Rubinow Simon, *V'khol Banayikh: Jewish Education for All*, 2010
- Matan Institute, www.matankids.org: Matan advocates for Jewish students with special needs, empowers their families, and educates Jewish leaders, teachers and communities so that all Jewish children have access to a rich and meaningful Jewish education.

Q&A WITH THE SPEAKERS

Please post your questions in the question box

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NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON FAITH AND DISABILITY

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

The slide displays logos for the following partners:

- THE ELIZABETH M. BOGGS CENTER ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
- ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON MEDICAL SCHOOL
- VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
- Georgia State University CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN DISABILITY
- Department of Disability and Human Development COLLEGE OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES
- UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY Human Development Institute
- Partnership for People with Disabilities
- OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY
- UCONN UCEDD
- UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
- JFK Partners
- UMKC
- Institute for Human Development
- Center for COMMUNITY INCLUSION & DISABILITY STUDIES
- TEXAS CENTER for DISABILITY STUDIES

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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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