

Tonya R Whaley, BA<sup>1,2</sup>; Eric J. Moody, PhD.<sup>2</sup>; Kristen Kaiser, M.A.<sup>2</sup>; Cordelia Robinson, R.N.<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>The Iliff School of Theology & <sup>2</sup>JFK Partners at University of Colorado School of Medicine

**Background**

- Spiritual communities are, for some, important components of life.
- Faith groups may provide sources of support, (e.g., spiritual care, respite care)
- Individuals with developmental disabilities often face exclusion.
- Individuals with clinical settings may not have the training or resources to include spiritual care in their programs

“The all-too-frequent marginalization of people with disabilities in civic society and faith communities may lead to unique opportunities for re-membering people to faith communities and traditions, reconciling past experiences of spiritual wounding and pain, and redeeming / celebrating lives too frequently devalued.” (Gaventa, 2012)

“The reality of cultural and religious diversity and the need for justice among people who are marginalized and poor makes the message of love and neighborliness especially relevant.”(Reynolds, 2008)

**Community Outreach**

**Direct support** -100 separate requests for support in variety of settings (clinical, corrections, church/faith groups, schools)

<b>Cultures:</b>	African American	10	<b>Neurological Disability:</b>	Autism	35
	Caucasian	69		Asperger’s	5
	Latino	4		Downs Syndrome	20
	Native American	15		Multiple Diagnosis	35
<b>Faith Communities Experience:</b>				Prader-Willi Syndrome	1
				Genetic	4
	Asked to Leave	62			
	Escorted out	12			
	Arrested	2			
	Welcomed	4			
	No proclaimed Faith Community	20			

**Service provided:**

- ~ Individual or Small-Groups, face to face outside of Medical Setting
- ~ Community Resourcing
- ~ Case consultation and education with faith communities, clergy groups

**Technical Consultation** - responded to requests for technical assistance from a variety of professional and organizations

- ~ Interdisciplinary Team Consultation-may help reveal clinically relevant facts (e.g., identifying religious practices that may interact with care)
- ~ Clinical, Institutional, Community, and Family Home Support
- ~ Consult with congregations about how to be inclusive

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- ★ Many families have experienced hurt and exclusion from faith groups
- ★ Many families report wanting to be apart of a faith community
- ★ Many faith communities are interested in being inclusive, but often do not have the skills or understanding
- ★ Families members often drive inclusion
- ★ Faith community leadership can support inclusion
- ★ Professional consultation may provide needed insight to clinical presentation

**Collaborative Partnership**

JFK partners and The Iliff School of Theology recently began a collaboration to include a seminary trainee into their LEND program. The goal of this collaboration is to provide the trainee with core competency in developmental disabilities so that she may incorporate this training in her practice; to develop interfaith spiritual support for individuals and their families who are diagnosed with neurodevelopmental disabilities that can be implemented in clinics (chaplaincy), and to provide technical assistance to community partners wishing to provide inclusive environments for their congregants.

**Collaborative Curriculum:**

- ~ LEND Core Competency in Developmental Disabilities
- ~ Interfaith Spiritual Education (through community partners)
  - ~ Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Non-traditional faiths.
- ~ Theological analysis and interfaith spiritual care training
- ~ classroom debates

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- ★ Considerable and careful review of participants qualifications and history important
- ★ Curriculum differences, professor expectations, competencies are reversed
- ★ Differences in vocabulary and educational cultures
- ★ Importance of group reflection and debrief
- ★ Large and diverse network of resources
- ★ Collaborative mentoring addresses differences in the cultures



**Conclusions**

- Spiritual Life is important to individual and their families
- Many face exclusion
- Faith based communities want to be inclusive but the just do not know how
- Collaboration between a seminary and LEND pave the way to help meet the needs
- Technical consultation can be helpful

**The strategies we highlight are:**

- Establishing Community-Based Partnerships
- Providing Consultation and Direct Intervention