>> Shelly Christensen: Hello and welcome to the third webinar in the RespectAbility AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Interest Network 2024 series: Spiritual Dimensions of Trauma, Healing, and Resilience. In this webinar we'll be joined by two good good friends of ours, and I'm introducing them in just a moment. If you would like to access the PowerPoint for today's webinar, it's available right now, and there will be a link in the chat so you can have access to the PowerPoint. My name is Shelly Christensen, and I'm the Senior Director of Faith Inclusion and Belonging at RespectAbility. I'm also a member of the Religion and Spirituality Interest Network at AAIDD, and have been involved in planning the webinars. My pronouns are she and her. I'm a white female and I have dark curly shoulder length brown hair. I'm wearing blue glasses and a dusty pink sweater. Behind me are photos of flowers from my garden and a Tiffany style lamp on a bookcase. The AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Interest Network and RespectAbility have partnered to bring you this webinar. RespectAbility is a diverse disability Le nonprofit that fights stigmas and advances opportunities so people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of community. And RespectAbility is the only national disability organization with a department dedicated to multi-faith inclusion and belonging. The AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Interest Network is pleased to co-sponsor this series. The Network works for recognition of the importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across faith traditions. In addition to the webinar series, we host a forum on faith and disability at the annual AAIDD conference, which will be held this year in Louisville Kentucky on June 10th through 12th. And we've included a link in the chat so you can find out more information about the conference. For more information about AAIDD's Religion and Spirituality Network, you'll be able to visit the website, and that link will also be in the chat. Next slide please. This webinar is being recorded, and you will receive the link via email afterwards, along with a survey. Please take a few minutes to respond to the survey, and it will help us plan our topics for the 2025 series. ASL interpretation and real time live transcription are provided. If you would like to view the ASL interpreter in a larger screen, we invite you to pin her video, which will spotlight the video throughout the entire panel. We will be taking questions from you later in the presentation, and we invite you to add your questions to the Q&A box. Please join me today to welcome our presenters, the Reverend Padraic Collins-Bohrer and Lida Merrill, today's presenters. Reverend Paddy is a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, and a faith community inclusion specialist and chaplain with Heritage Christian Services, an agency that supports people living with developmental disabilities in Rochester, New York. He helps to connect people served by the agency with faith communities of their choice, offers prayers, builds relationships, and provides support during times of grief, illness, and at the end of life. Paddy's interests in ministry include exploring the portrayal of disability in the Bible and sharing his voice as an advocate for more -- clergy who live with disabilities. Reverend Paddy lives with cerebral palsy and is highly sought after to preach on his journey to ordination and about disability theology. Reverend Paddy earned his -- Master of Divinity degree from Colgate Rochester Croer Divinity School in Rochester, and Diploma in Anglican Studies from Bexley-Seabury Episcopal Seminary in Chicago. Lida Merrill has led the spiritual life/faith community inclusion team at Heritage Christian Services since January 1996. The team works towards addressing the spiritual needs of people served by HCS by focusing on inclusion of people with disabilities into local faith communities, providing training and supports to employees, and serving as resources for local faith communities as they welcome all people into their congregations. The team also works with the creative arts team at HCS to support people at times of loss or death. Lida is a graduate of Northnastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan University and has a Master of Theology degree. In her 2024 retirement, Lida serves as a consultant for congregations and organizations. Congratulations, Lida, on your retirement. Now it's my very great pleasure to welcome Paddy and Lida.

>> Paddy: Thank you so much Shelly for that wonderful introduction for both of us, and it is a pleasure to be here. Thank you to AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Network and to RespectAbility also for the invitation to be here. Our presentation webinar today is titled Stronger Together: Heritage Christian Services Grief Support Team. And we'll be talking about how we developed our grief support team at Heritage Christian Services in Rochester, New York, and why that's important to us and what the -- how the grief support team supports people throughout the agency. And with me as I'm here -- I'm Padraic or Paddy Collins-Bohrer. I'll give my description. My pronouns are he and him. I am a white male. I'm wearing a blue shirt. I'm not sure if you can see it but I have a necktie on today. It's a necktie of -- a old street map from Rochester from 1926. History is one of my passions. I wear glasses, I have a gray grayish brown beard, and thinning balding hair. I'd like to invite Lida -- I'm so happy to be co-presenting with Lida Merrill today -- also as Shelly shared, recently retired from Heritage Christian Services. So it's -- Lida, welcome.

>> Lida: Hello Paddy. Thank you to Shelly for the introduction, and for all the work that AAIDD is doing. My name is Lida Merrill. I am a white female. I have on a blue turtleneck shirt. I have glasses. I have gray and little bit of brown and silver hair. Behind me in the blur is a bunch of plants and a map of New York State. I think you can see Long Island on it now. And I'm delighted to be here to have this opportunity to teach you or share what we know.

>> Paddy: Thank you Lida. And so, with our presentation today, we'll be talking about our grief support team. So first -- speaking a little bit about what is grief and how we support people who are grieving. So grief is the emotion that comes with loss, usually described as sadness when people are sad. And we often find that when we're supporting people, the sadness and grief is from the death of a family member or friend, the death of a pet, and at Heritage Christian Services, we're a support agency, so as the turnover of support staff -- as support staff come and go, many of the people we support are often --have close connections with folks, so that's a sadness. A diagnosis of a serious illness, supporting people when they've experienced divorce of family or other close friends. Relationships ending, and anticipated loss. And certainly grief can last for a few days, many years, or somewhere in between. Of these bullet -- of these points here, certainly the length of grief -- an example of this that I've seen -- I support someone at Heritage Christian Services who's experienced the death of their mother two or three years ago, and also, their father is experiencing significant health changes. So I meet with this person quite regularly to meet with them, provide presence of -- presence of listening, and being with that person to support them through their grief. Also recently, I'm current -- actually currently supporting someone who has lost -- has experienced the death of a beloved pet, and actually the Pet's loss happened, again, several years ago but, again, an example of the grief is something that there's not a beginning, a middle, and an end, it's something -- that persons just learn to live with and we support people through grief. And then what is -- for our grief support team, what is a team? Team is a group of people come together to work towards a common goal to support an ongoing project. And in this case, the grief support team -- we gather to support people who are grieving within our agency. In our grief support team at Heritage Christian Services, we have our faith community inclusion team, which is the spiritual care team and that's a group of four full-time spiritual care folks. We serve in the role of a chaplain or many of our -- many of the traits of our role are like those of a chaplain, supporting people through -- in times of need for all kinds of spiritual care. There's the four of us, and we also -- as members of the team are the creative arts therapists, so the music therapists, the dance therapists, the speech therapists, the arts therapist, and behavioral support team members. So providing a holistic view of support for the people that we provide support to.

>> Lida: So many times a person who is serving an agency often feels like they're alone, especially at the time of death. So at Heritage Christian, we support over 400 people within our residential -- certified residential programs. And as they're getting older, they need more support - not just physical supports and not just psychiatric or psychological supports. They also need spiritual supports. So we step into try to provide that or keep them connected to a faith community where they can receive that supports. We have over 4,000 employees, and they grieve also. They grieve the loss or passing of the people that we support, their death. And they also grieve the staff turnover with their co-workers leaving. And just in general in their lives, they have some serious times when they are grieving. And they -- if they don't have a faith community they're looking for somebody that will listen to them, so we make ourselves available for listening. So the faith community inclusion team is four people, and the four -- cover 100 sites between Rochester and Buffalo. So we have 400 people in 100 sites. That's an awful lot of work for just one person to do, so that's why there are four members. It became obvious to the other clinicians in the agency that our team, as much as we were working, could not cover the intense supports and after care that people needed. So it was them that came up with this idea of creating an official -- creative arts -- an official grief support team. And we are very grateful to them that the creative team, the clinical team, and behavioral supports team all wanted to work together to help people to have the best life possible, which includes being able to grieve. So that -- that's where the birth of our team was, and that's where we hope that you listening will realize, oh, that's an idea, we could do that. Because I realize not everybody has a faith community inclusion team, not even one person. But the creative arts teams and the clinicians -- they get to know the people that they are supporting very well, and they see the need. Even if the the loss was 10 years ago and the person is still grieving, there's only so much that the team can support. So they joined with us to create the team that we have now. Oh, okay, that was just checking to see whose slide this was. We have it written down on the side here. So the reason for the grief support team is to support people in all areas where there is a loss in their lives. So we support people who are ill. We support people who have a critical illness and they're hospitalized. We support people as they're approaching the end of their life. And then we are there to support the team and their friends after they have passed away. That includes our residential service programs and the day habilitation programs. We also support other -- types of grief, for instance, somebody who loses a favorite staff. We support people and employees within our -- the two programs as requested by them. We -- especially if it's an employee and -- we don't want to invade their privacy if we happen to know that maybe they've had a loss, but we do put it out there that we're available to listen to them or to refer them to other people. We often refer people to the EAP program, or anything else that we know within the organization that would help them in their grief. And our name indicates what we do, that we support people with grief. We didn't go with some flowery name that didn't support people. So that's why we go by the grief support team as who we are and what we're doing.

>> Paddy: Thank you, Lida. And -- how we're stronger together, and -- how we support people together as the various members of the team. We each share our various gifts and abilities and strengths. So for example, oftentimes people who are grieving love music. So we -- I can call on our music therapists to come and share favorite music with people. Also sharing grieving through art, creating art of various types, and also listening -- the ministry of presence coming to listen and just be present with individuals. And so being able to -- call on a group of people that have a variety of strengths -- we realized again with having the 400 individuals -- 400 plus individuals we support, and just the four members of our team, when people are are grieving throughout the region -- and we cover both the Rochester New York and Buffalo New York areas. So to be able to call on people to support us as we help people who are grieving. So again at the various locations throughout the agency, the various times of day, we're able to work very much a non-traditional schedule. So all often times -- my day will start later so that I will meet people closer to the end of day at dinner-time. I love to share meals with people. There's nothing better than than breaking bread together and sharing a meal together. So that's one way that I like to support people, for example. On this -- slide here, you see some beautiful yellow flowers, and on the flowers is a monarch butterfly that is enjoying the flowers as well. So you can see that those yellow flowers on a green grass background with a orange and black butterfly. And so, again, the combination of the faith community inclusion team or spiritual care team, the clinical team with all of -- with the behavioral support creative arts clinicians, as I was sharing, has been a -- has really just given us a wider group of people who can support individuals. And I certainly really appreciate being able to call on so many colleagues with so many gifts and backgrounds. And again, with the multidisciplinary team strengthens the response we're -- and resources we're able to give. Also here with this last point, I wanted to highlight the importance of self-care. Being able -- making sure that we take time when we're supporting individuals and people to take time for ourselves to be able to, as we provide support for others, to step back and take time to support ourselves too for rest and prayer. And certainly with having -- one of the benefits of having a larger team is to be able to support one another. Especially right after a person who we support has died, we can -- will often come together and just support each other to ask how we experienced -- how we're experiencing grief, and how we can support one another through the difficult time together. And this, as we work, again, more as we work Stronger Together as the grief support team -- being present with individuals, being able to, as I shared before, offering a ministry of presence. I find oftentimes the best way that I can support people is just by being present, being with the person who is grieving just quietly and letting them know -- that I'm there, especially when many people who we support communicate non-traditionally. So that may not be speaking with the person, or -- learning the best way to communicate with that individual, with that person, and then to be with them, provide that support of presence. Again, using simple appropriate language, talking about the death of a person, if they've died. If they're sick, using language that is the most comfortable for them -- for the person. Honor the -- honoring the faith tradition of the person and their loved ones. Again, with the name of our spiritual care department, the faith community inclusion team, highlights that one of the roles that we do in that particular piece of this grief support team is to connect people with faith communities of their choice, making sure they're included in their faith community team or their faith -- faith community of choice. And we certainly do that as part of this larger team as well. And also, honoring the relationship of the person to the staff who may have moved away. I talked about with the high level of Staff turnover, I know that I support one person -- one young man who really misses a staff person who moved onto another job many years ago, but still is able to take out the memory book that was made by Staff -- and the behavioral supports team to help that person through grieving and missing that -- person. And Lida, I know that you wanted to speak on these two points here?

>> Lida: Yeah. Because we have such a diversity of team members, we can offer more alternatives or options for the people that we support. So maybe they want to weep, cry, maybe -- there's somebody that we're very surprised that they're grieving the loss of somebody, because they didn't -- maybe they didn't spend any time with them, or from what we could observe, they weren't really close to that person. And now they're telling us that they were their very best friend. Well we're going to go with that, that that's their very best friend, how do we support somebody whose best friend has just passed away? We also support people who are -- they just need someone to be with them. That's what they're looking for. So some of the things that we can do with that person -- we have a -- one of our colleagues will take socks that are rolled up into the matching of the pairs, and if she's dealing with someone who it seems like they're angry, then they throw the socks. And an hour of throwing socks will take care of their anger, and it's -- something that they can do, and it's something that is appropriate. It's also something that any of us can do if we're angry is throw some socks around. Another thing -- taking a walk with the person, going to the beach -- we're not too far from Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, so going up to the beach, throwing rocks in. Another is visiting their faith community with the person. A man that I supported had -- his mom had died, and the group home asked me to come and tell him that his mom had died. So he -- this man is Native American, and after I told him that his mother had died, he was silent. And I wasn't sure, did he hear me? Did he understand what I said? And he sat there silently. And I told him again, just to be sure. And then I sat with him, and he just sat staring. And for about half an hour, we sat there. And then he stood up and said go. And where are we going to go? Church. So we went to his church. And they let us in. It was not a Sunday service, it was just -- the pastor happened to be there and said we could come in. And then we just sat. No prayers, no talking, no music. We just sat together. And what he was doing was the ritual for end of life for his culture is silence, sitting together with people who love you, and going to where you can express your faith, and sitting silently there for healing. And that's what we did together. Listening to a person, especially that man I was just talking about when he says "go." I don't know where he wants to go. Maybe he wants to go where -- to his home, to his parents' home. So when you get to know their level of communication, you can get better ideas for whether they want to be touched, or whether they make eye contact. There was one man that I had -- his house unfortunately had had several deaths over two-year period. They were older, so it was just an older group of people. And I was telling them that another person they lived with who they loved had died. And I was looking at this man who was very contracted. He did not use vocabulary to speak. He didn't really seem to communicate very much, other than through his eyes. And as I told them that their friend had died, and I was looking right -- I happened to be looking at him, and he just drew his muscles in and looked up. And it struck my heart that he really does understand what I'm saying, and that's where you have to get to know the person and never assume they don't understand, because they -- they do.

>> Paddy: Thank you, Lida. And as the grief support team we also will take time to support this support staff who are supporting people who are grieving in both our residences and day programs, and as staff may be grieving themselves, listening to support staff as they share stories and their -- experiences, reflective listening -- listening with individuals and being present. Speak -- again, if there has been a divorce and that's the reason for the time of grieving, again, speaking of both parents, and just learning about and just being with the person where they are in that challenging time -- at that challenging time of divorce. And to -- we as the group support team communicate as members of the team what each person is doing so that we have a -- we've had a support network of how best to support the support people. And this is often done -- we use -- we both have a group support team email and which the whole agency has, can send us information through. And also we communicate virtually often using Microsoft Teams and also Zoom, but making sure that all the members of the team are are supported. And -- the members of the group support team we often will have -- we'll have particular folks who are assigned to various sites, but then that person who's assigned to the site will reach out for the support that is -- the additional support that's needed, whether that's a music therapist, or arts therapist, or the dance therapist, or other people, to come and support. I know that I have had some really really great experiences connecting with people through artwork, when at a house that I support, the house manager will reach out to me and said oh this person was just with the art therapist and they have -- really thoughtful theological questions about God. Will you come and and be with them and talk with them? And so to make those kind of connections and to learn what that person is thinking about and it's -- it's really neat to see how those connections come together. Again, with self-care, we're always here to support one another and to make sure that there's always the support that's needed for everyone. Also, providing a time for staff if they need to step away to -- for self care, we can, as a member of the team, can come in and and help out to provide that support for the entire team in that sense. And We have -- I don't know, Lida, if you had comments on this photo or -- but this is a photo of some grieving individuals and being stronger together as we find hope in working together in all. of the different ways that we've shared. This photo here is of two people -- two women with long brown hair supporting someone who's grieving, who's tearful, who's crying.

>> Lida: So as we've come together as a team, we have accomplished many things. And so many things that we've done were always on my I want to get this done, I want to do this, we need to offer this or or another activity. And because we have so many clinicians part of this now, we have been -- accomplished so many things. So we have an agency-wide file online that contains documents that we have created around the death topic. And so it could be a document just for employees to read. Of course the people that we support could also read it if they wanted to, but it's addressing the need of the person -- the need of the staff, and how they can support other people, or how can they support themself? We have documents in there for how you support a person as they're grieving. We have documents on who they can contact. We have whatever -- hopefully whatever it is they need is right there at the edge of their computer. One of the things that we needed to do was introduce ourselves to the rest of the agency. So some members of the grief support team went to staff meetings that were being held and spoke about the grief support team and what they were doing and how the people they support and those who are supporting can connect with us and that we are available. So they went to residential managers meetings, day habilitation managers meetings. They talked to clinicians that weren't part of our group. They just -- they went to anywhere they could find people that were meeting as a group and would benefit from what had to be -- what we needed to share with them. And we found that helped us get more relief or more influence with the employees, because now they knew that we're there to help. We have an email that anybody can click onto, it's called the grief support team. And they can click on it and they can ask us a question, or they can say, oh, so and so's mom died, or her dog died -- whatever it is, someone who they care about has died. And they can easily access it through the email. We have a memory garden at a center here in the Rochester area, and it wasn't being tended that well. So something that we as a team did is we joined together and we started pulling weeds and highlighting the plants that were there available -- and the little brick steps that are along it, they had names of people on it. And that's a way for the grief team to come together, and it's a way to honor those who have passed away. We have found it's really important to know where somebody has lived. It could be somebody who lived where they needed a great deal of support, and then they gained skills and they moved to a place where they were more independent, and then they grew even more and they moved out into an apartment. Well that's three different places this person has lived over maybe 10 or 20 years. And if we don't remember -- which we don't remember where everybody came from -- we start writing it down, because we're not going to know. And then we're going to have -- we're going to make a mistake, and we're not going to let a staff person who worked with that individual, or we're not letting their former housemates know that this individual has died. So we just keep track of that, because now we know how important that is, because we did miss people. So that's something that this team is working on taking care of.

>> Paddy: Thank you Lida. Also together, we have -- one of the things that we have just completed -- we've had our first grief support online seminar for Heritage Christian Services Agency employees and for others -- friends of the agency, and anyone who works in providing care and support for people at service agencies like Heritage Christian Services. And that was in March of this year. And speaking about grief support and how grief is experienced. We had workshops and seminars on how people we've -- how people we support have experienced grief. Our music therapist and dance therapists and arts therapists got together and shared some of the work that they do. Lida, we were delighted to invite Lida back to be our keynote speaker for that day. And Lida and I also presented on that day specifically on self-care. So it's a great -- great time to come together and again, share with the agency all of the resources that are available. Also, we have -- documents that are available for people in our agency on how to support someone who is grieving. Again, available through the shared computer system. When our -- again, our grief support team email is always -- is part of that, so people can always reach out to us and ask us more questions about that. We've organized -- when people are grieving, organized what's called a meal train to be able to provide meals for particular sites who -- that are grieving. And that's -- a collective something that the entire agency really pitches in and works on together. People from different houses will bring meals, cook meals, bring meals to houses where someone has just died or maybe has someone who's experiencing a particular medical challenge, where it's nice when you know that food is coming -- great, good tasting, delicious, nutritious meal will be provided, and it's not something you'll need to stop to prepare. But someone else is sharing their love and care for you within the agency to bring that, so that -- that's something that we also make sure that that's happening. And then also, we've had events, again, throughout the year, going on through two years now, a blue holiday event around the December holidays. We know that with grieving, as we talked about, is something that lasts a very long time, and can especially be very intense during the holiday time. So coming together to support one another through holidays and also through other special times of year, and -- those events happen both in the Rochester and in the Buffalo areas, coming together to provide ongoing support. And here is a picture which Lida took from one of the events that we had. It was -- this happened shortly after we were first able to come back together and in larger groups, so it was an outdoor event at one of our sites. It's actually a farm with animals and a great great space to see nature. But in this particular event -- and this slide says Stronger Together and it was a service -- a memorial service to grieve 27 people that we hadn't been able to come together as an agency to really share our grief together -- people who had died between 2020 and 2022, just to come together for prayer and song and a time of sharing remembrances together. And each person -- we had photos of each person, and you can see here we had electronic candles and stones -- items of remembrances. It was a really really beautiful, beautiful, beautiful service there. So an example of something that we did there. And this is from our Rochester service.

>> Lida: And we have the -- this is just an invitation that was sent out to people as a --when we were planning one of our blue holidays. And everything that we offer, we try to make it ecumenical, so that people who don't have faith or who -- whatever faith that they do have, whether they're Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish, whatever faith the person is that we're very -- we recognize that and we try to keep our activities honoring of all people. So when we are -- this is a postcard that was sent out reminding people about the blue day that we were going to be having -- and it was well attended, because we send out a lot of messages to people inviting them to events.

>> Paddy: And this is a -- this here is a photo of a flower, I believe that this is another photograph that that you took, Lida. A photograph reminding us -- and it says the caption underneath is together we can support -- we can support people to make beautiful things happen as they adjust to their grief. So again, supporting people where they are, providing that grief support. And with that, we invite your questions and answers. You can also see my email address: Padraic.Collinsbohrer@HeritageChristianServices.org, and that's Padraic spelled one of the Irish ways, Padraic, and then also Lida.Merrill@gmail.com. So questions -- time for questions and answers. And with that I will stop sharing my screen.

>> Shelly: I just want to say thank you for this. Sorry, my desk is going up and down. I want to thank you for this wonderful presentation. I just -- I know I learned a lot. It got my brain kind of cooking and so forth. So a couple of questions from Melissa. Melissa wanted to know if you're able to share any of the documents that you've created, or any of the resources that you've created, and what that might be?

>> Paddy: Just to talk -- talk more about what the documents are, yes. Yes, so the documents that we've created of supporting someone through grief, they talk about what is grief, what does grief look like again, sharing about how a person who are direct support professionals, for example, when they're supporting someone who's grieving, what they can expect -- what that grief looks like -- and how to reach out, who to reach out to, that again, grief is not only when somebody dies, but can be when, again, somebody -- any type of of health event. Also, it might not be -- might be someone who's not very seemingly very close here in Western New York, beginning of last year now -- it's been a few months or a little over a year now, but when we -- when many of us witnessed on television at the Buffalo Bills game Damar Hamlin and his cardiac arrest. Many people experience grief through -- by watching that. And we've supported many people here at Heritage Christian by seeing that grief, and being able to talk about that grief, for example. So that document explains all about that grieving process. Also we have a team -- we have another document called A Team Needs List, that is a checklist to say, these are the kind of things that will support that you -- please make sure to reach out to us if you need additional support in the home, if you need someone to provide a meal so that people know exactly what it is we can provide.

>> Lida: Was she interested in whether we could email those documents to her?

>> Shelly: Sorry. I think yes, sharing them with audience members, with others. And that kind of goes along with the question that I had as well, and that is do you have advice for an agency that is thinking about addressing grief -- a service provider agency that's thinking about how can we -- better support people in the grieving process? How --

>> Lida: It starts with one person who is determined that they're going to get others to join them and create a grief support group team. And that one person needs to be ready to advocate, and advocate, and advocate to get it going. And they -- maybe it's a creative art therapist who realizes this -- boy, I'm dealing with an awful lot of people who are grieving, or a residence manager who says, wow -- we've lost people and this is getting really hard. All they have to -- they just have to advocate and lobby. Start -- make an appointment with the executive director. Talk with the executive team. Talk with the other people on the team. Just don't stop talking about it and the need for it. This was a need that we had for a very long time, but the four of us couldn't do. It took the creative art therapists and the others joining us to make this happen. I think the creative art teams that agencies have would be a great place to start -- including them in your advocacy if they're not already part of it, that this is what we need. And it doesn't have to be faith focused, which much of ours is because that's what the people that we're supporting are asking for, but it can be any -- celebration time or grieving time where it focuses on that person, and what that team group needs to do is just say, look, we've got this person who died, and we want to support each other, and just keep nagging.

>> Shelly: Thank you. So can -- if Melissa or anybody on the call would like to maybe see some of the documents that you have, could they contact you and --

>> Paddy: Yes. Contact either one of us at our emails. I'm more -- probably would be best to contact me at my email address there which is in the slides, but let's see, I could also put it in the chat possibly here -- need to get that set up, but it's the Padraic.Collinsbohrer. Here -- it's a long email address, let me see here --

>> Shelly: Paddy, we can also include it when we send out the recording.

>> Paddy: That would be great.

>> Shelly: Thank you, that'd be so great.

>> Paddy: You're welcome.

>> Shelly: We have a question from Ben -- my colleague Ben Bond, who is our associate at Faith Inclusion and Belonging at RespectAbility. And the question is what steps do you take education-wise as a team to make sure that grief care is sensitive to non-Christians?

>> Lida: That is a great question, Ben. It's getting to know people. It's all of the time that we are listening, that we're having a dinner with people, that we're out at the beach having a group activity and finding out -- recognizing that not everybody here is a person of faith, and -- or they're a person of a different faith. So that's where the physical activities that we talked about and memorializing the person. So that could be the throwing the socks, if the person that they're supporting -- if that's something that would help them with their anger. Or it could be taking them out -- if they are a person who uses a wheelchair, just going out and spending time alone with them. It's all about the time, and we adjust what we want to do or what we need to do depending on who the person is, whether it's an employee or whether it's somebody that we support. We listen and then we work diligently to meet their need. It's not something that we just say, "oh well, we can't do that." Yes we can, and we have to find out a way. And most of that's going to be through listening.

>> Shelly: Always comes back to listening doesn't it?

>> Lida: Yes, it does!

>> Shelly: Very first thing, very first step. And listen, and listen some more.

>> Lida: Yes.

>> Shelly: We have a comment from Diane, Diane Sturmer. Sounds like Diane is a member of your team?

>> Paddy: She is, yes.

>> Shelly: Okay. And thank you Diane for commenting. Diane wrote one of the things we are learning along the way is to make parameters clear for staff. We support the team, but we are quick to offer supports outside the agency, so EAP, local grief share groups, and counseling.

>> Paddy: Yes.

>> Shelly: Thank you, Diane. Okay, one more question. What books and resources have you used to educate yourselves in how to support people with intellectual disabilities in this work?

>> Lida: This is work that I've been -- I have been doing for 25 years, and I don't happen to have a stack of books, but I have a stack of books that well -- it just grows, and it's written by people who work in this field of supporting people with disabilities. And they write books. [laughs] I would highly recommend a book that Diane Sturmer has written on this topic of grief and I don't know if she could put that book -- in the chat for people to go on and buy it online or get it for their Kindle, but -- and I can't think of a single title that I have, but I know there -- there are quite a few out there. It used to be believed -- the people with disabilities -- developmental disabilities didn't grieve, and that's heartbreaking to me, because I know they do. So it's only been within the last 15 years that anybody has been writing about this topic. And then there's been a lot more writing within the last five years, as it's becoming something that students -- people in college, somebody getting their Master's or doctorate degree, that they're studying these topics. I don't know if Paddy's got some possible ideas.

>> Paddy: Yeah, I was thinking of books and again, no one particular book comes to mind, unfortunately. But there are just so many great resources when connecting with the disability theology community, and certainly grief is a topic that we -- that is talked about and should be talked about more, certainly.

>> Shelly: 100%. Diane, thank you. Diane's book is called "Good Grief," it is available online at Barnes & Noble and also on Kindle, and Diane spells her last name Sturmer, and she calls out Wes Laskowski as the illustrator, so thank you for that. We'll check that out. I -- our time has come to a close, and so I want to thank Paddy and Lida very very much for joining us today, and sharing what will be I think a webinar that we'll come back to time and again for all the work that you're doing, and I look forward to hearing more about it at the Institute of Theology and Disability when we're together. So on that note, thank you so much. Our next webinar and our final webinar in this series is on May 8th. Speaking of the arts, it's titled "Spirituality and Healing Through Expressive Arts," and our presenters will be joining us to talk about how expressive activities can help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience grief, communicate, reflect, and process emotions. And the registration link is on the slide right here, and I believe Eric might be able to put that in the chat, so look for the survey, look for the recording of this, and I want to thank each of you for joining us here today. Have a great rest of your day.