



LUNCHTIME WEBINAR

The Faith and Culture Network is hosting a series of lunchtime webinars. These sessions are designed to raise awareness and share knowledge on how we can better support faith and culture within the Developmental Services sector.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORTS

MARCH 24, 2026 - 12:00 - 1:00PM

People experience and process grief and loss in a variety of ways. Grief and loss can be experienced through the death of a loved one, the loss of a pet, relationship, community, job or home – and all lead to a journey through grief. For someone with an Intellectual Developmental Disability (IDD), this can add another dimension to how grief is processed and how it may be exhibited or observed by others. This workshop aims to provide an overview of the grieving process and the important role of spirituality, religion and faith in supporting adults with IDD through this process.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. Understanding the grieving process and the difference between grieving and mourning.
2. Ways to support someone in the grieving process with a focus on persons with an IDD
3. The role of faith, religion and spirituality in the grief journey, with a focus on persons with an IDD

FEATURING:

John Fraresso is the Chaplain and Spiritual Care Practitioner at Bethesda. Before joining Bethesda, John served in a similar role at L'Arche Hamilton for five years. He holds a Master of Divinity from the University of Toronto and is currently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry Program at the same university.

John's academic background has given him a strong understanding of grief and loss through the lens of faith and spirituality. He has supported people with IDD through both individual and communal experiences of grief. John has also faced significant personal losses from a young age, including sudden and traumatic events, which provide him with a deep and compassionate understanding of the grief process.



Melissa Gibson has worked in developmental services for more than thirty years. After completing her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at Brock University, she began her career with a local Community Living agency and joined Bethesda in 2002. Throughout her career, she has remained committed to supporting adults with Intellectual Development Disabilities in meaningful and person centered ways.

At Bethesda, Melissa serves as the CAPA Coordinator for the Adult Clinical Services team and as the Bereavement Support Coordinator. She uses the Choice and Partnership Approach, a model that focuses on shared decision making, collaborative planning and responsive services, to guide her work. With specialized grief education and personal experience, Melissa is dedicated to ensuring that adults with IDD receive compassionate, respectful and dignified support through grief and loss.

For more information please contact:

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