>> Shelly: Hello and welcome to the fourth and the final webinar in the AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Network and RespectAbility 2024 series: Spiritual Dimensions of Trauma, Healing, and Resilience. And -- very excited about this webinar. We'll be hearing about spirituality and healing through the expressive arts. My name is Shelly Christensen. I'm the Senior Director of Faith Inclusion and Belonging at RespectAbility and I'm also a member of the Religion and Spirituality Interest Network leadership team. My pronouns are she and her. I'm a white female, I have dark curly shoulder length brown hair, and I'm wearing purple glasses and a purple top, and I have a cream colored background behind me. RespectAbility and the AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Interest Network partnered to bring you this series. About RespectAbility: we're a diverse disability led nonprofit that fights stigmas and advances opportunities so people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of community. RespectAbility is the only national disability organization with a full-time department dedicated to multifaith 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 are hosting a forum on faith and disability at the annual AAIDD conference which will be held in Louisville Kentucky on June 10th through 12th. And we'll put that link in the chat for you in just a bit. The webinar is being recorded, and you will receive the link via email afterward along with a survey. We encourage you to please take a few minutes to respond to the survey to help plan topics for the 2025 series. ASL interpretation and real 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. Please add your questions to the Q&A box to do so. Now join me in welcoming Dr. Michelle -- I'm gonna say the French pronunciation -- Boulanger Thompson, Dr. Yumi Shirai, Jamelle Texeria, and Dr. Jeanne Carrigan for their presentation about how expressive activities can help people with IDD experiencing grief communicate, reflect, and process emotions. Dr. Michelle is an assistant professor in research and teaching. She earned her PhD in special education, Master of Science in occupational therapy, and post-baccalaureate certificates in autism and leadership in neurodevelopmental and related disabilities -- that's the LEND program -- from Virginia Commonwealth University, and holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Spanish Literature from Indiana. Dr. Thompson has worked as an occupational therapy practitioner for 34 years, working with individuals with disabilities and their families across the lifespan, in early intervention, public schools, and adult home health. She serves on the board of directors for Mosaic, a national organization supporting community living needs for adults with IDD, and serves in a leadership and research role for the AAIDD Creative Arts Interest Network. Dr. Yumi is the director of the Sonoran UCEDD artworks, an instructor at the University of Arizona Department of Family and Community Medicine, a social behavioral scientist, and a trained modern dancer. She holds a PhD in Family Studies and Human Developments, and a Master's in Dance, with an emphasis in movement therapy from the University of Arizona. Movement art has continuously provided her with a structured tool and unfolding opportunities to develop her physical, emotional, and intellectual strength to process thoughts and life challenges to share and engage with others in a larger community. She has instructed creative movement classes for diverse community populations over 30 years, including youth, older patients in hospital settings, and adults with IDD. Merging her training and movement therapy and dance with over 17 years of applied field work and scholarship in the social sciences, her passion is supporting aging individuals with IDD and their family members during late life transitions through the development, implementation, and evaluation of tools and model programs. And next, we welcome Jeanne Carrigan, Ph.D., A.T.R. And Jeanne has spent over 50 years working directly with children and adults experiencing cognitive challenges. During her lifetime of work as an art therapist, special educator, and university instructor, she has used the arts to foster communication and social and emotional health. She is now retired and living with her Franciscan religious community in Wisconsin. And Jamelle Texeria has been a part of the Artworks art studio since the fall of 2023. Jamelle is a self-taught artist whose work is characterized as Paleo-art, comic-style, and fan art in nature. His favorite medium is digital art through Krita, but he is also well-versed in graphite and ink. During his art making process, Jamelle likes to feel prepared. He starts with research and knowledge of his subject matter, and then he usually finds a reference image and begins to sketch. He is also part of a research project team for AIDD2Health: Access for Intellectually and or Developmentally Disabled People to Health-Related Research Projects, serving as an advocate co-researcher. So before we welcome our guests, I just want to remind you to please put your questions in the Q&A, and we've saved time at the end for our presenters to address your questions. So welcome all panelists and so glad you're here!

>> Michelle: Thank you very much. There's us again. I just wanted to start off by talking about how we're connecting spirituality to the arts. And when I think of spirituality, it really comes down for myself and a lot of other people starting with community and belonging. And that -- I just wanted to remind everybody -- like the foundation of the home and community based services, the policy that is supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live in communities with families and friends is very person-centered. It focuses on supporting friendships, relationships, and it has self-determination as a very important component. And that self-determination really connects to people's -- own ability to choose their own spirituality or spiritual experiences as they define it themselves. I also wanted to remind people that -- spirituality is being looked at as a fairly new social determinant of health, that -- spirituality improves life for all people, including people with IDD. And then just a -- very brief definition of spirituality, from what I've been -- from my lens, is that spirituality is how people seek a sense of meaning, purpose, connection, value, or transcendence. And this might be through the arts, it might be through community with other people, it may be like the roses on the -- the picture of roses on the page, it might be through looking at beauty and nature. So there's lots of ways to access spirituality. But today we're going to talk about accessing spirituality through all those ways, but especially through the arts. Want to turn the page? The other topic I wanted just to kind of peek at before we hear about the arts and spirituality is a concept that in special education that is starting to find its way into other circles, which is Universal Design for Learning, or you might have heard of it as UDL, which talks about creating space for engagement for -- so multiple ways of reducing barriers to increase engagement for people with disabilities to participate. And -- in our topic today, to participate in the arts to access spirituality. And then the second component of UDL is having multiple means of representation. That might be language or comprehension -- so multiple ways to access the topic of their interest. And then the third component of UDL is multiple means of action or expression -- having multiple ways to express your feelings, to communicate what you want to -- to share with the world or just with yourself. And I feel like this is really foundational for reducing the barriers and increasing supports for all people to -- find themselves and to access the arts, and then thus, access their spirituality. Turn the page? And I'm going to pass it the Baton on to my friend Jeanne.

>> Jeanne: Hi there, I'm Jeanne. And if you're listening to this audio -- just through audio, I'm a kind of a short lady with a lot of gray hair. I'm -- I'm edging toward 80 years old, so I'm the grandmother of the group. And what I'm going to do today is kind of share with you my personal experience as a Franciscan sister who has worked my whole life with people with intellectual disabilities, children and adults. And I worked with them and been with them in terms of developing their spirituality, and as an art therapist. So this topic is kind of perfect for me in terms of my experience at least. So I'm going to start off right away to tell you that I do have a bias probably, so you can kind of check that out. I'm a Christian. I'm very open to all denominations, of course, and religions and -- but so when I speak here, I may not use the most current terms, so if I offend anyone, I just apologize ahead of time. My experience as a young sister -- I was sent to an institution. And I guess I say, yes, an institution, because at the time that I began my work as a Special Ed art teacher, there were only institutions, and pretty isolated classrooms in schools. There was no integration at all. Now the first institution I was sent to was a place called St. Collettas, and it was a farm. It had a hundred sisters that were the workers there, and about 500 residents. And we had a pig farm, we had cows, we had our own chickens, we raised all of our own fruits and vegetables. In a way it was a village -- a whole village, and I belonged to a choir in this village and -- we had religious mass, we had all types of different religious experiences for the students, and we also had quite a wonderful art program there. So it was a very outdoors kind of experience, and one that I can reflect back with what Michelle said, had a lot of nature to it. And I was telling her the other day that when I would be teaching a class on how the image of God and maybe what God was like, I would bundle up all my little students and we would go on over to the barn, and we would look at the newborn calves and how the mother would take care of those calves. And the students really understood that -- it would be wonderful to have a God that would be just like that, and they really really enjoyed it, and seemed to get that idea. Now, my assignments included just a lot of -- probably artwork. It started as art education, and then gradually I got my PhD in Art Education and Art Therapy. At the University of Arizona where I worked with Yumi, we developed a studio that was -- expressed almost all of the arts. So we had drama, we had the visual arts, we had dance, we had music, and each of the students seem to kind of favor one or the other. It seemed like a lot of them liked the drama, and of course they made the props, and they made beautiful paintings. We had exhibits every year, and sold many of our pieces of art for very large amounts of money. I think the students really enjoyed that. And what happened was the community started to learn about us, and they were very excited, also, at the quality and the beauty and the honesty that the art provided there. So after 15 years of doing this, my spirituality or my way of praying really changed. It changed, it became much simpler. I use nature a lot in my own prayer life, in my spiritual life, and everyday events of my life have become much more like prayer than they were. So there's a kind of an integration that has happened since I have been with and lived with people with intellectual disabilities. My spirituality also has expanded. So I have studied -- at the Temple of -- with the Zohar and mystical Judaism. I do sit in Zazen in Buddhism, and I also of course share with my sisters here in Wisconsin in Holy Mass. All of this, though, has been part of my life, has just been woven in and blended into my life, and has been an honor really to have such a wonderful experience in terms of sharing all of these things with these people. Spirituality has -- has deeply affected my life. And it has grown into a multifaceted kind of experience. The art expression is really a feeling put into a visual form, and it is multifaceted, and it offers up in a way -- a way to use color and shape and texture and movement, rhythm, and music. And I have asked my students when I teach them to keep a journal to journal their ideas and their feelings visually. And I know that when I have been in ArtWorks, I see that completely without even having to ask that usually the day is journaled in the picture or the sculpture or whatever is being made. So it -- it's a wonderful, wonderful, healing type of experience. The other thing it is is accessible to everyone. It kind of puts us all on the same playing field, if you want to call it that. It can be a record of a painful experience, or a happy event. And of course, it clarifies the confusion sometimes that we all have. Now I had a gentleman who joined ArtWorks, and he had just lost his mother, and he was from New York and and he relocated to Wisconsin. And he was really extremely pretty sad, grieving person. We gave him a piece of paper and markers, and without hesitation, he took out the orange marker and he -- he made this beautiful orange house. He didn't want to use any other colors, just orange. And after the first session, the next time he came to ArtWorks, he asked for an orange marker again, and he made another orange house. Well, to make a long story short, we had 30 -- 50 orange houses. But what was beautiful about the orange houses was not only the repetition, but his working through of the loss of his home and his mom, and the little changes that would happen. The student that was working with him -- the university student would get all excited when she started to see flowers appear in front of the house. And Eddie started to feel very proud of all of his houses. We had so many many orange houses that we could have paved probably the whole street in front of our studio with his orange houses. They were very numerous, but very -- each of them very unique. So that repetition is something that you see in many people's artwork, especially people with disabilities. If we could have the next slide, that might show that. There you go. So you can see in this tray, you see this kind of rainbow of colors, and you can almost feel the texture of the colors. Now usually when someone is really excited about a media, like Eddie, they will repeat it again and again and again. And it's a soothing kind of repetition. And if you look at our religious experiences, we could look at it as a mantra, a visual mantra, or we could look at it as -- in Catholic terms, a rosary or a litany. And we can say it again and again, and it takes us to this other place, this place that is very comforting, this place that is sacred. Now if you would show us the next slide, you can see another example of that repetition. All right. And of course, this is called Happiness, and this gentleman got his earphones on and he looks like he's really really involved. Now, how can this be a prayer or how can this be spirituality, you might say? Well I guess I'm learning that spirituality in the widest sense is really delving into yourself and expressing yourself and who you really are. It's not your material self but your spiritual self, your soul self. And of course, this kind of repetition experience takes a person into a different zone, into a different place. And that is a place that I would like to be. And I was commenting to Yumi and to Michelle that a lot of my friends can get to this beautiful simple place easily. And for me, sometimes my spirituality could get so complicated that I struggle with it, and I don't want to. I want to be in that simple space. Now, repetition -- all of you that have worked or been or have friends or family with different types of intellectual disability know that repetition is very comforting. I'm going to give you an example that was not a prayer, and it wasn't comforting to me. But we have a gentleman -- or used to have a gentleman who liked to tear paped, loved to tear paper and especially from phone books. And he would tear this paper in very small thin ribbons. He loved the sound of it. He loved the feel of it. And so when he was finished with his art he had a little container, and he would go, and he would tear and tear and tear. Now it always would be a panic, kind of, of the staff when he would run out of paper, because he would go looking for paper and tear whatever he could find. Well, one day it was payday. I looked for my paycheck -- oh my goodness, it wasn't on my desk. So I ran to the art studio, and sure enough, there in beautifully torn ribbons was my paycheck in about 20 pieces. And of course, I brought it to our purser's office, all taped up, and said could you please cut me a new check? And they couldn't believe it -- the beauty -- the beauty of the tears, the delicacy of how that check was torn. [laughs] Anyway, that was not a prayer, I have to say, but it was very relaxing for him and I'm glad he enjoyed it, although I did not enjoy it as much. Anyway, art expression and religious practice in my life have gone hand in hand. And in fact, they're not really separate now -- they're blended. And I believe that for a lot of people in the art studios that have access to art, it's very easy to move into, if not, you're already into that spiritual space. Painting can be a visual prayer. Drumming the drum beat can be a mantra. Your body movement and swaying can kinesthetically place a person in a sacred space. There is no separation, and I can't imagine myself in my life ever trying to contact that inner space in myself that I feel is God without being able to paint or draw. It's impossible. And so I'm so excited that we now have kind of formalized this opportunity and made arts much more accessible in our churches and in our synagogues and in spaces outside to allow people to touch God, or to touch the sacred, or to touch who they are in themselves in that way. So now I would like to turn this over to Dr. Shirai and to the wonderful artist that accompanies her today to talk about their experiences of the arts, and grief, and healing. Dr. Shirai?

>> Yumi: Thank you Jeanne. So I invited Jamelle because we had a couple of plans but Jamelle jumped in because one of the artists, Cory Searcher, was sick. And I wanted to kind of -- Jamelle to share extension of what Jeanne talked about -- what art means to Jamelle as an artist. And he has an example art that -- and. he shared with me when he worked on this specific art piece -- what he was going through and what does art making mean to him. So I will put the microphone back to you, Jamelle.

>> Jamelle: Okay so -- when I was making this -- I'll introduce myself. [crosstalk] My name's Jamelle. I'm artist here at ArtWorks. I do a lot of fan art and Paleo-art. Paleo-art is like a type of form art that reconstructs prehistoric life during ancient times, right? And when I was doing the specific picture, there was many things going through my head where that -- there's like a lot of things that happen -- sorry. So I'm pretty tired, this is my first -- and I just got jumped into this. When I was making this image, it was very -- I wouldn't say intense, I'll just say more like my mind was at a whole different place when working on this. It was just more of my -- just trying to figure out how I feel at during those -- couple of weeks, cause -- couple things happened that week. It's has just been a sick family member -- doing good now, but sick family member. A lot of things going on in the household, other things I really don't want to disclose, but it's nothing too bad, it's just like, there was a lot of stress that caused onto it, and the drawing this out kind of helped me throughout that kind of stress and all that. But also kind of took a lot of my sleeping hours, funny enough, to work on this. But it -- this definitely helped me -- because drawing this kind of pieces with ink and all that is like meditation to me. It's like, it helps me -- my mind be at peace, because I'm -- my mind's very hyperactive. So it's just pretty easy for me to draw out my very -- the way I shade is the way my mind is moving, like, with a lot of hatches and all that -- the way I think, it's kind of like all over the place. The best way I can describe this image is, even though it's not the most pretty looking scene, in like -- like, display wise, it just -- dinosaurs were a thing that helped me throughout all my years. I was interested in that, like, from the very start -- the closest thing I remember was, I was the age of three or five, and funny enough I -- my mother still tells me this to this day that I was able to correct the paleontologist. And this was during a tour back in, I believe, 2005. There was a thing called T-Rex Museum that used to come around to Tucson. And there was this one time this one paleontologist just came through, and he was like telling a little -- little presentation about dinosaurs and all that. Funny enough, I feel like this was something that inspired me to do art, because the way -- he displayed the certain dinosaur a way -- I was like, he drew it wrong. So, I stood up when I was younger and I was in the middle of the whole -- the whole presentation, I was like, you got the wrong finger placement on the dinosaur, right? And he's like, no I got it right, and all that, I got it right. I would not stop sitting up, because he looked at my mom and -- she's telling the paleontologist, like, he's not gonna sit down till you check. So he checks, and funny enough, he was wrong. So that was a pretty funny thing that happened, that I also remember right after that is he came out to me and my mom, he was like -- because I was very young, but I was also very infatuated with dinosaurs. And during the time -- certain times we knew about them, like, what they looked like, and what they acted like. He was so surprised I knew that by that age. So he actually began to walk around with me in the museum showing me everything around that, and that's why I feel like really inspired me to do a lot of Paleo-art and comic art, like, overall. So that's my little story about that. But I don't really have any much additional thoughts to that whole situation. But that's what kind of explains this.

>> Yumi: Yeah, thank you so much for sharing Jamelle, and especially jumping in -- to the discussion. And I think it captured what Jeanne said and how that can apply to all of us, possibly, or person with disability. So it's not just for -- everybody gets some life challenges, and how that can be helpful if you have access to art, art making, and if you find that talent early on, and it's really -- you just can't live without drawing, and sometimes it keeps you up late.

>> Jamelle: Yeah, it's not fun, even though it's worth it at the end -- you got something done, but at the same time, it does kind of take a toll.

>> Yumi: Yeah, thank you so much for sharing that.

>> Jamelle: No problem.

>> Yumi: Great work, Jamelle, thank you. Yeah, and if you can bring the -- oh this one is a comment, someone that detailed -- Carol commented on it.

>> Jamelle: So it's -- it reads from Carol Raymond, sorry if I mispronounced your name. To the artist, with such fine detail, did you plan on a story or design when working, or do you just work when you see what comes on the paper? For this specific art piece, this was one that just came out of fruition out of my head, but at the same time, there was a lot of inspiration to it. I looked -- whenever I walk around outside, pace around outside, look at the environment, I always think of what did it look like back during like the Cretaceous Period and all that. Even though the creatures presented didn't live in this certain time period -- I just thought in my head, what was it like specifically? And the two animals I actually wanted to use in this was -- were Utah Raptors, which are, funny enough, were the two -- I would like to say they were the real life Jurassic Park raptors. When you think of how big they were, even though the ones you see in the movie, they're not -- don't look like that at all.

>> Yumi: Okay.

>> Jamelle: But this is the closest thing to that. I know I'm kind of getting off tangent, but basically, yes, this just came out of my head, so --

>> Yumi: So he's a storyteller, that's what Jeanne's gonna probably comment. Yeah, so he always have some story behind it, when you work on the pieces, right?

>> Jamelle: Yeah -- like at least -- if it's not, like, a straight up story, there's something behind it. I just don't know what --

>> Yumi: Inspires you for the moment, yeah --

>> Jamelle: It comes up later on most likely. Just like when I'm working on it, just mindless ones.

>> Yumi: Yeah, great, thank you Jamelle. So now we have a image of two flying birds, and this one was gifted to Michelle. So Michelle, do you mind to share what's the connection with this with you?

>> Michelle: Sure. So my very dear personal friend, who has a developmental disability, side note, really, painted these birds. And she paints lots and lots of birds and other images. The one on the right -- the white dove with the cross and flowers and tree is hanging in my house. She gave it to me as a gift. She gave it to me, lik -- I mean, we connected heart -- a heart connection, and she painted a heart connection, and then so -- and then she gave it to me. So this is what she does. She paints, she connects with people, she connects with her own spirituality -- she pulls the people looking at her paintings into that spiritual experience. And then she gifts -- she gives you a gift. It's a gift of spirit -- and it's a physical gift of a painting as well. And the painting on the left the green -- I don't know if it's a hawk or what it is, I mean, I look at that and I am just drawn to that painting. And it's the same thing. This is a painting she created for -- she made for a mutual friend of ours -- whose husband passed away. So when I look at this -- this beautiful painting, this beautiful bird, I feel uplifted. I feel connected to the god of my understanding. And I imagine other people have their own individual experience and their own individual interpretation of the art. But every time I look at either of these paintings, and I have pictures of both of them, so -- I have the one in my house but I have the other image on my cell phone. When I look at him, I feel connected to my friend. I feel connected to the world -- and I can be uplifted by her spirituality, if that makes sense. So thank you.

>> Yumi: Thank you for sharing. And so giving that storytelling aspects of it, and different people may see the representation of different picture to ourselves personally, and that may be connected to your own practice or spirituality. And so we're just going to expand this talk upon the project that we did at ArtWorks program at the University of Arizona, in collaboration with our artists, as well as our undergraduate students. So next slide please. So Casey -- she's just one artist who had been with us for a long time, and she passed away. But she -- when she was 40 years old, she lived with her mother and many cats -- those are like 13 of the cats -- most of her life. And when she was in the middle 40, her mother passed away, and when her mother passed, she moved into a group home, leaving her house and 13 cats behind. So some of them are outside, some of there are inside cats. But she lived there for almost the entire life, but she needed to move on to different place because her mom is no longer around. And because of the situation that she found in each places, she really moved around five different homes within the first year of her loss. So that is not uncommon for the people with IDD, who lives with the family members, right, and maybe none of the family member beyond the mom was around, and couldn't settle into any good home immediately after. So that was kind of one of experience working at ArtWorks for 25 years with Jeanne, that is the experience we frequently so -- so that was kind of motivation in some ways, in our lifetime, we lose someone or places. And you see in Casey's case, we not only lose our family member, but some places and connection in the community itself may disappear with it. So it's a complicated loss that maybe the person with IDD experience. Next slide please. So Project Together was kind of created based on this experiences - multiple numerous kind of loss that we experience together, and also supported through -- or we got supported through our losses as well as a community. And as we are art studio, we created an expressive art-based bereavement support curriculum for artists with disabilities. So I do not preach for many of the specialist who may be on the call or on the webinar that -- who support the grief or loss support. In order to make that, I went through grief support counseling degree, you know, online, because I was just a movement therapy trained PhD researcher. I didn't have a clinical license to be practicing grief counseling. But at least, I wanted to grief counseling degree to be familiarized to how we can really best support using arts to our community. So I cited some of Jeanne's literature as well as others -- the population with IDD, especially intellectual disabilities, often face communication challenges. Having arts really helps express our thoughts and feelings, and learn process and reflect upon our event and challenges. And it sometimes didn't make no sense to anything, but once you put into that tangible picture or word, we may have chance to reflect upon. And also the art create a space for connection with others, whether you share or you receive support, or you provide support -- the gifting of picture that Michelle said. So next slide please. So Project Together was a private personal process with group kind of process for 10 weeks. And in each of sessions we have themes. We learned about what does the typical grief process look like, we shared a lot of our personal stories. As a mover, I used a lot of gesture dance to share the stories, or learn the stories from others, and share, and validate our experiences. And also how we can really maintain the connection with the loved ones. And we have many activities. You can see in some of the visuals in there with the pictures, some puppet that we made, candle holders for the loved ones that we decorated, but at the end of this, our 10 week session, our artists really wanted that to be a art show in the public, so they really can share their story with their loved ones with the public. And I really need to clarify this -- not everybody like to share their personal story with the public. So it's really need to be a collaboration decision to make some of our stories to be public or not. And some part you may want to share or may not want to share. But the group decision was they wanted to share. So we worked with undergraduate museum education students as a curator of our community art exhibition. And we have a listening kind of group work -- how we going to collaborate to craft this art exhibition to particularly raise the public awareness of their story, and also the person with IDD's capacity also to share their stories in details, and also the needs that their life -- they may get some support through art or sharing of their story through arts, through art exhibitions. Next slide. So I'm just going to briefly share a few of what we have done. So throughout the six weeks of student and artist collaboration, they practically had a conversation over six weeks to get to know each other, what loss means to them, or who are the loved ones that they lost, and what kind of memories they have. So to have that conversation, we have a table with a lot of crayons and pens and pictures. So they had the conversation through drawings. They had conversation with laughter and gestures. And at the end over the six weeks, they decided on or collected many stories of the loved ones, and also how they wanted to present in the public of that story, and what part. And the artist get back to their studios and created their art. So this one is the example from Jack. And Jack was talking about his loss of his grandpa. You see on the draft part on the left side with the stick figure drawings. And this one is how they made the draft with the students, because he drew a pictures, but then student helped to document the story, a key point of story on the bottom. So Jack can remember each of little stories that were important to him. That was the connection with Jack with his grandpa. And I can just explain some of the pieces. Just a colorful pieces -- you can see the quad, he's riding the quad on the hill. And the next one in the middle upper side is he's walking with the field with his brother Michael and his grandpa Maku. And the right side -- pop side is a white building. It's a church with the beautiful white fence around. That was the church, when he visit his grandpa, they always went there. And the bottom right side, you see a country store. He always got soda with his grandpa. And the middle one was the small pathway that he walked -- I'm not sure that this path may go to the store or not, but he always rested. He liked to rest and relax under the tree. So that was his memory with Grandpa. And the left bottom side is his classic car that Granda Maku had. So that was his memory of, and that's what Jack wanted to share with them. And next slide please. And I like to keep some of the spaces, so the similar process happened for Joey. So when he talked to student groups for over six weeks, sometimes he talked about fishing, and sometimes he talked about a dog. Sometimes he talked about mom with the relationship with the dad, and student collected -- carefully collected the pieces all together. And with that draft, that picture of trees and fishing pictures and -- campers, and Joey was able to collate all the pictures in one beautiful art piece of watercolor. And this one is the campground in Patagonia Lake, and the family always parked in the parking lot 32. And they always had the bonfire. They went to fishing, you know, so that's the beautiful memory of it. And working with the students and artist, the students -- some reflection were that some of the realization of, okay, we can talk about death and life, dying in the conversation. Students was initially hesitant to it -- to having conversation with artists, because they didn't wanted to say things that trigger emotions. But the student, by talking to the artist, they realize it's okay to talk about it. And also some of the comment from the students said, I didn't realize that the artist can laugh and cry at the same time. Those dual kind of aspects of grief and bereavement exist. So that was a very big learning for myself as a facilitator of this project, as well as the partner of the project. And it was necessary to have someone who can listen to and help the artist to document. So all of those little pieces of puzzle of their memory can be curated the way that the member, the artist wanted to be, right, to perceived from others, how they see it in their vision. So that was a great collaboration with the artist, and I think this can be one of -- one way of telling the story and sharing a story with arts. And sharing the story itself can be the part of a healing process. And so that's what I wanted to share today, and I will pass the microphone to Michelle.

>> Michelle: And we can turn the page. And turn the page again. Just as a -- little wrap up -- Jamelle, I really liked what you were talking about that drawing is a meditation, and that it is calming, and I really really like that, because that's how my experience in -- how arts and creative expressions offer connection with people, with nature, that repetitive prayer, or the repetitive art, or even as Jeanne was showing us with the clay, repetitive -- just making a mark -- just doing something with your hands can -- can lead to creativity and meditation and connect people with their spirituality. And then, just to loop back to the very first two slides -- using that Universal Design for Learning lens. I think arts and creativity and spirituality really fit nicely there. It's almost needs to not be said, because -- but if we can help each person -- find what they need, whatever medium they need for creativity, for arts, be it -- visual arts like painting and sculpture, or dance, or theater, or music, or taking a walk in nature, or going to look at animals, or whatever that connection is that that person can -- they can be engaged -- engaged in what they are doing in front of them as that meditative practice. And then being able to express themselves as they need to for themselves, and that really is that connection to their -- inner spirituality. That's all I have.

>> Shelly: Thank you so so much. I'm just learning so much. We're showing resources up above, and we'll also be able to -- you'll be able to get the link to the PowerPoint as well as the transcript and the recording of this presentation. And -- I just have -- I have a lot of questions. I -- while you were talking I was knitting, it's my kind of spiritual practice that, as somebody who is neurodivergent, helps me focus and stay really connected. And what -- a lot of what you said really resonated. I do have a question. If -- to really -- to bring arts and spirituality and the -- way of navigating trauma, loss, grief -- is that a widely accepted practice, and how would -- someone -- where would someone find that kind of support, like somebody to walk alongside them?

>> Yumi: Anyone want to take it?

>> Shelly: Yes, Yumi.

>> Yumi: Okay, so for my take, Shelly, it's a great question. I think the first of all -- I'm not a clinician and clinical practitioner needed to be there when we needed clinical support. And there are art therapies and -- counselors who are trained in arts and movement and music, and they are available depending on the places -- within the AAIDD Network we have a few, but it's not everybody in the each state, right, or accessible from your part. But however, what Jeanne created in the place, that if you have a community of art together before we face trauma, I think that is really basic importance of we have access to that connection and community placed as a base, before it becomes a life threatening issues. Of course it's important, because someone who has that skill set and familiarity in utilizing that media, when they go to those therapy sessions, they can utilize art much better, like talking, or more than talking, but if they don't know how to use those medias, they are learning two things together, sharing their emotions, and learning the art together. So I really encourage that art community to be there for them. And it should be very inclusive to not just limiting to the person with disabilities, but anyone who like to express and explore. And I think it's -- our community, IDD community can create that for the general population as well. And Jamelle and Jack, our team does educate clinicians as well. We go to medical humanity sessions and stuff like that. I think sometimes along the way from the kids to growing up, we forget that part of excitement, a very simple joy of art along the way. And the silliness of it, right, it's just fun. So I think that's really -- I think I just gonna pass that to Jeanne because she has something to say too, I'm sure. So thank you for that great question.

>> Jeanne: Your answer was lovely Yumi. I did do some research in Switzerland, and I was really astonished to see that in the places that I visited that had workshops or schools that had students with disabilities, there was no emotional outbursts at all. And I couldn't figure that out. And I found out that they have access to arts, to music, and to visual arts every week. And it wasn't just to sculpture a product. It was free, spontaneous art that they could make. And so the teacher would watch and listen and hear the stories that these spontaneous art pieces would elicit in their students. And if something was a little awry, if something was a little a little bit off, if there was some sadness there, immediately, that sadness would be addressed by a parent or by a therapist in the school, so that it wouldn't kind of blow out of proportion. So it was kind of a beautiful support system that they had through the arts. And in sometimes, I would watch the art therapist or the painting therapist, they called, do this and they wouldn't say a word. No one would say a word. They would just be so busy in the arts, kind of like Jamelle, I'm sure. When Jamelle is working in his art, he's not talking and chitchatting. He's like concentrating -- like you're -- like you're knitting -- you're into this, you're focused. And that's what -- I think that ArtWorks is kind of modeled on that Swiss way of letting the subject matter and everything flow out of the artist, and not be imposed on them. And that it should be a constant kind of thing where they're comfortable with different media, they're very comfortable in using it. And then -- then when a problem comes up, there is no difficulty in expressing that with the media. They know the language of the paints, or they know the language of the pencils, they know how to use it.

>> Shelly: Wow. Thank you Jeanne and Yumi for that -- explanation and understanding. We've put up a few slides of upcoming events. And the first one is disability representations in the second testament, and we are so excited to welcome pastor and doctor Lamar Hardwick and doctor Amy Kenny, both to talk about experiences, as well as different interpretations of -- disability -- in the sacred text. And then on July 11th, we're all -- RespectAbility's team and board and advisors and followers and partners are convening in DC for the Disability Impact Awards, and that's Thursday July 11th in the evening in our nation's capital. So be sure and check those events out as well. I want to just close out our series. Certainly a big thank you, Jamelle, Yumi, Michelle, and Jeanne for sharing your stories, and really I think teaching quite a really important aspect of spirituality and healing. And I want to also thank the AAIDD Religion and Spirituality Interest Network for partnering with RespectAbility for these webinar series, and to all our speakers in this series for sharing their expertise and experiences. Please visit us at RespectAbility.org/Faith-Inclusion [and belonging] to watch the 2023 and 2024 webinar series. We look forward to seeing you all again real soon. Thanks for joining us, and as always, enjoy the rest of your day. Bye for now.