



Faith Community Leadership: Integrating Disability Issues and Perspectives into Training for Congregational Leaders:

A Collaborative Project between New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities in New Jersey has been chosen by the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council to lead a two year project in Pennsylvania focusing on training of clergy in issues related to disabilities, community, and congregational supports.

The project will first work with seminaries, Clinical Pastoral Education programs, and other congregational leadership training programs in Pennsylvania to determine ways that disability issues are currently integrated into their curriculum offerings and training programs. The goal of the project is then to help develop the capacity of those programs to offer a variety of ongoing training opportunities students and clergy who come through their programs. A second major goal of the project is to find and/or provide leadership to continuing education opportunities for clergy sponsored by faith communities, and, correspondingly, to provide resources and strategies to help people with disabilities, their families, provider networks and advocacy groups to work in partnership with clergy and congregations.

Those project components are based on the belief that training and leadership development happens in pastoral training programs, ongoing continuing education opportunities for practicing clergy, and, finally, when clergy, religious educators, and other congregational leaders are faced with needs and opportunities raised by members of their congregation and community.

A statewide interfaith Advisory Board in Pennsylvania will help guide the project. The Boggs Center project will be led by Rev. Bill Gaventa. (bill.gaventa@umdnj.edu) 732-235-9304. Please feel free to contact him with questions or ideas.

You can also help by:

1. Sharing this information with others through your own networks.
2. If you are planning an educational event for clergy or religious leaders and would like assistance, please feel free to contact us if you need ideas, resources, or other assistance.
3. If you'd like to be on a statewide listserv of individuals interested in the goals of this project, sharing ideas and resources, and information on training opportunities, entitled FLNPADDC@lists.umdj.edu, please email me, bill.gaventa@umdnj.edu or to be put on directly, Elizabeth Ong, at ongel@umdnj.edu. You have to be entered to post and receive information.

A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service