Welcome to the **Faith & Spirituality** **SBIRT Training**!

The misuse of substances is not part of God’s plan. God created us in his image (Genesis 1:26) – to thrive, have wholeness, be in relationship with Him (John 3:16; John 10:10) and have eternal life (John 17:3). Sin entered the world (we are all sinners) and separates us from God (Romans 3:23). The way we use substances can do just that, separate us from God, which makes it a sinful act. God hates sin (it is costly – the wages of sin is death and judgement – Romans 6:23 and Hebrews 9:27). But God is a just and loving God full of grace and mercy. He still comes after us. While we were still sinners, He sent his son in the form of man to reconcile us back to Him and his purpose (no death, no judgement – John 1:1, 14) by dying on the Cross for our sins (Romans 5:8). 1 John 2:16 – for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. John 15: Jesus is the true grapevine (to bring us back to the Father). We need to help people not remain fallen branches.

Substance misuse can be a deviation from God’s plan but God always welcomes us back.

Many people have negative views of not only substance misuse but the people who misuse them. But we learn in Isaiah 1:17-19 - Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. God’s desire is that we bring reconciliation and justice to the world, to speak up for the marginalized. For those of us who have not engaged in substance misuse, God asks you to humbly show empathy towards those with substance use disorders, rather than proudly assuming your spiritual superiority. As it says in 1 Peter 3:8- To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.

This class aims to prepare students to understand substance use and substance use disorders to inform future practice (in various settings – community mental health, health care, schools, churches) – learning about theories, prevention/interventions and treatment programs that aim to address this complex challenge to human thriving/wellbeing.

Public notions and experiences of addiction can cause many concerns, thoughts, and doubts. Be mindful of this. Paul instructs us in Philippians 2:3-11 - Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

May you be filled with the love of God as you learn to seek restorative justice for those who are enslaved to and seduced by substances.