Social Issue Spotlight: Healthcare Access

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**SPEAKERS**

Kimberly Swartz

**Kimberly Swartz** 07:43:57

So I'm sure a few more folks will continue to join. But I want to make sure that we're able to make the most of this time together today, this is going to be a lunch and learn for some folks, maybe a breakfast and learn for others. And we are going to have a lot of information and a lot of shared learning and shared conversations to just fit in to one hour.

So we're gonna go ahead and get things started. Chad, do not worry at all, I hope that you all have brought a cup of coffee or a snack. And like I mentioned before, this is meant to be a pretty informal, casual community gathering space, it's a chance for some collective learning, and really lowering the barrier to entry for learning about a really important topic and how different leaders in the nonprofit space are approaching this really important topic. So feel free to show up however, you can, whether that's on camera off camera, we're going to be inviting people to put their own questions in the q&a or chat box throughout, but also will open up space towards the end for you to just unmute yourself and talk with our panelists and ask them questions directly. So like I said, show up however you are most comfortable with during this conversation, and we are recording this event, and all registrants will receive a copy of that event.

So on behalf of the entire Taproot Foundation team, I want to just more formally welcome all of you to today's event, social issues Spotlight on Health Care Access, we're excited to have each of you here. And as you might notice, some of some of the folks on the line might have even been involved in this initiative, but taproot has really invested heavily in volunteerism research and user feedback gathering over the past several months. And one of our core learnings has been the business professionals in the taproot space and outside of our immediate community as well really crave more knowledge about and exposure to the social issues that nonprofits are tackling greater access to information about the urgency of the challenge the people that it impacts, really putting a face to the name and to the creative, community driven solutions that nonprofits are employing, that will help us create additional cross sector understanding pro bono connections, but most importantly, empathy for one another, just that that shared, shared empathy. So since we're not the experts, Taproot is elevating the voices and work of some of our close nonprofit partners through a series of social issue spotlight panels. And so welcome to our first one, the topic being healthcare access.

So today, I'm so pleased to be joined by a panel of a few of our nonprofit partners. This is going to be an open conversations on challenges impacting healthcare access, and how nonprofits are stepping up to address these pressing societal issues. We'll also discuss how these organizations could use your support immediately, pro bono consulting, maybe being an option, but also other methods of support as well. So I want to thank everybody who submitted questions upon registering for this event. We use some of those as prep questions for our panelists. So I'm going to start with some of those prepared questions. But again, we're going to be using that q&a box, we'll be using the chat box and we'll be inviting you to come off of mute. If you do you have any live questions that you'd like us to pose, or that you'd like to pose directly to our panelists. Great. So a few additional logistics notes. We are recording this event, everyone will receive a copy of that recording. And if you do need any tech assistance throughout the event, I'm going to ask that you shoot a private chat over to my taproot colleague on the line. Meghan Gillette, you can give a little wave Megan is going to be our admin support system for this event. So please do not be shy. Send her any questions or challenges that you might be having throughout. Alright, so with those logistics out of the way, I want to get things rolling with the fun stuff.

So a few introductions to kick us off. My name is Kimberly Swartz, my pronouns are she her hers. I'm located in Charlotte, North Carolina, and taproots, director of community engagement. I'll be the moderator during today's panel, but we're gonna leave most of the speaking to our wonderful nonprime For the experts who are on the line today. So with that said, I'm delighted to start with those introductions. Beginning with Dr. Bernado, who's the president of conscious moms, a Louisiana based nonprofit who's focused on maternal mental health awareness building and resource access. rd is the project lead. She's also the president and founder of this organization. When is a native Louisiane, who's worked in the nonprofit community in Baton Rouge as a board member and secretary for the past few years. She has gone on to pursue her doctorate in physical therapy from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, and earned her degree back in 2008, already developed a strong sense of devotion for the nonprofit space from witnessing the generosity and positive effect of numerous nonprofits and helping mothers in particular being a mother herself, and having friends, family and colleagues who experience maternal health issues.

So moving on to our next lovely speaker, we have Liz O'Donnell, who is the founder and CEO of Elia in action. Ally in action is a nonprofit providing care packages and bereavement resources for women, birthing people and families who've experienced neonatal loss. Liz is a former elementary school teacher, which that alone is something to celebrate and thank her for her years of service there who now focuses on lion action and stillbirth prevention advocacy full time. She's a two time graduate of the George Washington University, with degrees in sociology, psychology and elementary education and stepped into the nonprofit world. Or in stepping into the nonprofit world and out of the classroom was a transition that took Liz by surprise. But since the death of Elia, Elizabeth realized that her job as a mother was to establish a legacy for her daughter while also supporting families down the same path in life. So thank you so much, Liz for joining us. We're really looking forward to learning more from you.

And then our final panelist on the line today is Dr. Michelle Haley, who is the founder and director of together well, a nonprofit that is lowering access to mental health care through community workshops. Michelle believes that education is a right and not a privilege. And she founded the nonprofit together well, after an incident in her own family clearly demonstrated the critical role that education can play in addressing mental health challenges. Dr. Haley's deep understanding of the mental health field comes from nearly two decades of experience in a variety of roles, including CEO, therapist, researcher, and adjunct professor. Where, I'm forgetting the last line here, she is currently based out of the San Francisco Bay area. So please, please, please, if there's anyone else bay area bound, introduce yourself, and call out if you'd like to make connections with Michelle or any of our panelists, if they're located locally to great, so where the work that taproot does all of the impacts that we seek to make through creating connections between nonprofits and volunteers, it wouldn't be possible without the partnerships and the generosity and trust that nonprofit partners as well as the volunteer community members who are on the line with us today, place in us.

And so I want to take a moment to recognize the three amazing nonprofit leaders that we have on the line who are sharing their time, and vision and intelligence and experience with us. And also recognize the time and energy and passion of all of the participants on the line today. And just thank you all for showing up and showing out in this way. And we're really excited to learn alongside each of you today. So thank you so much. And with that, I want to get right into it and start posing some of these great questions that folks presented ahead of time, starting with, why do you do what you do? What called each of you to working in the nonprofit healthcare access space? And Michelle, if you don't mind, I introduced you last. So I'm gonna give you the mic first.

07:53:36

Yeah, my pleasure. So it's both a personal and professional like it is for many of us why we do what we do. And so in my family, mental health was really evident. So my father died by suicide. I had my brother overdosed on heroin and fentanyl. So addiction and depression and mental health has always been really present. And so that's really what led me on my journey to pursue psychology. We have something and in therapy world that we call research. So it really set me on that trail to learn more. And so when I was doing my first clinical rotation in graduate school, I had, I went back to Maine for the holiday. And my grandfather was really sick, he was in the hospital. And I remember having a moment while I'm sitting there in the hospital, and the doctor comes in, he's speaking all this jargon.

And my grandfather graduated Middle School. So he doesn't know some of the more advanced terms that you learned in graduate school, I barely knew what the doctor was saying. And so I had this aha moment where I was like, What is the point in going to graduate school, if you can't break down the terms and words for people, in a way that makes sense. And so I'm sitting there, and then I have this other opportunity? Well, I'm connected with my grandfather, we're talking about addiction. And he was coming from this, this perspective, that was like, really old school thinking it's a choice as opposed to an actual medical issue. So I had an opportunity to bring out the whiteboard, and really draw out what addiction looks like in the brain. And he loves cars. So I really used like parking lot a parking lot is is a place where receptors are in cars is neuro chemicals. And I didn't use fancy terms like neuro chemical, and serotonin and things like that. And so I just kind of showed mechanically how it works in the brain. And he had an aha moment. And because of that, he was able to heal a relationship with his daughter who had been struggling with addiction for a really long time.

And so that's, that's really one of the formative stages. And so I went back, and it was offering workshops to the community. And I saw how impactful that was. And I realized that when we can really get the collective together to offer workshops is so much more powerful than if I'm trying to do it myself. And so that's how together well was really created. And so we're a platform that connects mental health professionals to the community to provide emotional wellness workshops. So that's long story long, you know, it was really a series of different events and the combination over time that really led me down this journey.

**Kimberly Swartz** 07:56:21

Yeah, I so appreciate you taking the time and allowing us that sense of vulnerability that you just did to share your story and kind of where this concept for the nonprofit came from. And what I really loved hearing there was just this idea of how can we break down barriers, jargon, a barrier to mental health, and healthcare resources, understanding empathy across the board, and I'm sure we're gonna hear that maybe as a common thread throughout these services, yes. And it that that piece in particular is so critical, because you're not going to be able to get a patient to follow a treatment plan. If it doesn't a resonate, make sense or be broken down in a certain kind of way that can be clear. You're not going to get people to follow suit. So that's why that's so critical.

**Kimberly Swartz** 07:57:16

Great. Thank you, Michelle. Already, I wonder if I could pose that same question to you, what really drove you to this space?

07:57:26

So wonderful story, Dr. Russo. And thank you again, taproot for having me here. Um, what drove me to start my, my nonprofit was, first off, having that firsthand experience, like Dr. Michelle talked about with her family, I have three little ones. So I have a seven year old, recently five year old as of Tuesday, and a three year old. And so, you know, when I realized there were just different challenges for different moms, whether you're a single mom or whether you're a mom of one, a mom of multiples, you have a child with disabilities. You're a military mom, whatever your a career or entrepreneurial mom, there are all sorts of challenges for each mom that they each have to overcome. And in talking, you know, like I said, just in and of myself having my own experiences, but talking to friends and colleagues, a lot of women feel alone and unsupported in what they're going through. And we see stories all the time that just break my heart of kids being abused or killed by their parents. So the one people that they are supposed to feel safe and secure that are supposed to protect them that are doing the worst things to them. And you know, I really feel like it's it

Other things that are causing them to do these things and act these ways and that if they had support, if they had resources that there would be different outcomes for not only the mom, but the child, the family and the community. Um, so, um, you know, that's basically what, you know, conscious moms wants to do, we want to bring awareness to maternal mental health and saying, Hey, mom, like, I see you. And we also want to encourage kindness towards moms, you know, I feel like we've all been somewhere, whether we've been to the airport, the grocery store, just out and about, and your kid may have a tantrum, or whatever it may be, and the nasty looks or stares or comments that are being made, and it doesn't help, you know, and, and instead of our focus being on the child, we're focused on what everybody else we're focused on making them happy, or what they're thinking instead of our focus, you know, really being on the child. So we want to bring back that kindness and awareness, we want to bring back that village, we've always heard it takes a village. But when we look around, we're like, where's the middle is? I don't see. Sure. You know, so we, you know, we want to do that, because I feel like it's changed. Society has changed their views towards kids. And instead of them being blessings, they're now burdens. And we just, you know, and we feel like it's just like I said, the pressures of society, them feeling like they're going through this alone, they shouldn't be feeling this way. So we just want to make sure moms have all the support, kindness, resources, everything that they need.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:00:37

Yeah, you're changing, changing the narrative? Well, I want to first start by saying happy birthday to what's your five year old? Yes, six moment. I also I want to acknowledge that I don't know if I was the only one on the line. But I had to take a few deep, steadying breaths there, as you were describing some of the the trauma that children, unfortunately are going through the invis rather invisible trauma, unfortunately. And so I do want to just take that moment to name that some of the conversation and discussion that we're going to have today about the health care challenges affecting community members is not going to be they're not gonna be easy truths for us to hear. But I think it highlights why it's so important for each of us to really be educated on these issues, and the different niches and the different pockets of society, that they each impact. So already, I just want to take a moment to thank you for going deep there. Thank you. All right, Liz, same question from your end, what drove you to the space what drove you to this important work?

08:01:45

So my daughter Alia is what drove me to it. I had a very healthy, perfect pregnancy up until it wasn't. And I actually didn't even know that stillbirth still happened, let alone happen at the rates that it does until it was happening to me. And so I noticed that the response after was just I loved my hospital experience loved, despite what was happening was actually the best possible experience I could have had, given what was happening. But when you leave the hospital, you just walk out of there with nothing. And maybe a few pamphlets on support groups, support groups, were not something that I was ready for yet. And when I, you know, just kind of now that I talk with friends about it, I see that a lot of other people weren't ready for that. And so what could we do immediately to address the needs of women walking out of the hospital without their baby.

So I formed the Aliyah, inaction self care package. So we have six self care items that we have in the package along with a book or books depending on your situation. And these items are just little things like a facemask tea. We have a lavender, candle, lavender shower steamers, little things that when you are in the throes of grief those first few days, what can you quickly grab just to make you feel something when you feel like you'll never feel anything again. And so because giving out these packages immediately is the goal. We partner with hospitals that have inventory of them, as well as the books and then they choose what books are appropriate for the family. But um, you know, just being able to give something a tangible bereavement support to families immediately was very, very important to me. And now we're in pretty much every hospital in the DC area and we're extending nationwide. So the response from hospital staff has been really positive. It's I've even gotten feedback that It's helped staff members feel a little less awkward when they're dealing with a family. Because it is awkward. And there's no way around that it's tough to interact with a family that’s like basically just crashed and burned. And that's been some good feedback that I've gotten.

And then just hearing from families that have received the packages, it's been very everything has been overwhelmingly positive for such a not positive situation. And we do provide these packages for any form of pregnancy or infant loss. So I do it all for my daughter. And I'm happy that we are growing at the rate that we are the beautiful

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:04:39

It's a beautiful legacy to leave. And I noticed from your own story, as well as from shelves and RDS as well, there's this through line of this passion, then being connected to the great business plans and making it happen that it takes to be a leader at your level. But the aha moment as Michelle poEdit came from your each of yours firsthand experience with this with this issue. And I do wonder if that's a challenge for many folks on the line, and even folks who couldn't join us today, but might be watching the recording back. Some of the challenge and understanding or awareness of these issues is that they've never experienced themselves. And so I'm curious to learn more from each of you. Is there an aspect of this health care access challenge that you're each tackling that you feel like the public still don't know enough about? Do you think that there's some barriers just to awareness that exist and and how would we go about breaking those barriers down? So I know that that's a bit of a levelled question, but I'm hoping that each of you will hang in there with me as we dig through it.

08:06:00

I mean, I just kind of keep going off what I was just saying when I didn't realize that stillbirth still happened until it was happening to me. There are 23,000 stillbirths a year, never in my life, would I ever even remotely guessed that number. And now I I'm very educated on that number. I'm very educated on the fact that many of them are preventable. Often we hear about miscarriage and we still don't treat that the way that we should be as a society, stillbirth infant and death is very kept, it's just kept under the rug. And I've made it a priority, especially in Washington, DC to pull it right out and love it. Because it needs to be done. A lot of people, when interacting with families that have experienced this loss, they don't know what to say or do and that's okay, that's completely normal. We don't even know what to say or do and we're the ones that are living it. So I think just acknowledging it. And if you have a friend or family member to say, you know, I recognize baby's name, or I recognize that you were going to have a baby, what can we do to try to prevent this try to make other people see that this is still happening, especially at huge rates in certain communities in this country. So just talking about it.

 Like just what the other two panelists said with Michelle, and already there, they're talking about how things that affected them. Now they're making organizations about it, whether we're talking about addiction that needs to be talked about a lot more than it is when we're talking about exactly as already mentioned, with judging parents in a store, we've all seen a situation like that go down. And we just are kind of like who, maybe if that's how you react, but we need to be talking about it. And we need to say wait, what can we do to help that parent in that situation? So the more we talk about it, I think the more some of these issues could be not necessarily resolved, but just handled a lot more appropriately

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:08:07

Yeah, no, that makes total sense. And already I saw you nodding your head in agreement throughout. So I want to pass the mic over to your comments. Yeah, so I was gonna piggyback on Liz, a lot of times you don't know something until you're in it. And then sometimes, you could still be in something and just not aware of it. So and I say that for moms. Like I just learned that, you know, if you've had a personality growing up as being like a sweet kind person, not really too emotional. And then when you have kids, you start to have this sudden rage or anger that something and so it's bringing awareness, like okay, if you notice you Have this are these reactions like, maybe you need to go talk to someone, you know, like there's something that can be done. And so I think, for so long, we're just told to like grin and bear it, the most popular thing, oh, that's just a part of being a mom, you know. And that's not necessarily true. Like, I shouldn't feel this way I shouldn't have to feel this way. So bringing awareness to that, and again, piggybacking off of Liz, you know, I never had any fertility issues miscarriage with either of my pregnancies, but I've had friends who've experienced infertility, who have had miscarriages, and my best friend, her cousin who had a stillbirth. And that's major, um, you're looking forward, you've decorated the room, you've had a baby shower, you've carried this baby for nine months, you've named them nine times out of 10. That's huge. For me. Even as a mom, even as having a baby, I did not know how to be there. For my friends. When I was pregnant with my first baby, I had a co worker who was experiencing infertility. And I felt guilty each and every day that I walked around with my belly in front of her, even though it wasn't my fault. And I honestly, I just didn't know how to be supportive, or what to say without it being cliche. And so what we've recently done, we conscious moms actually started a podcast, and we talked about different things. And so it's funny, we talk about this, because we just literally filmed Saturday, an episode, where we talked about rainbow babies, and fertility and miscarriage. And not only that, we talk about these two moms journeys through their experiences with it.

But for outside people, how do you support and so I learned for me, because I thought if I continue to bring it up or check in, I was making it worse for the mom. But in actuality, I wasn't. Because they want you to check in on them acknowledge it, they want that. And so I learned something. And so I feel like it's sometimes it's not people totally just being like main or cold to it. But like, you know, Michelle's that as well, she had to break it down, because there are some barriers, you know, from how things were in the past to how they are now, and people not understanding things. And so, um, you know, I think that's been a big help us doing these podcast episodes where we bring up various topics. So that it's educational, not even for somebody going through it, but educational for the public for your support system of how to help you through your motherhood journey.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:11:44

Sure. I mean, there's a lot of historical baggage that people bring in to all facets of health care, but especially mental health, as well as maternal health. And so I'm so glad that you you named that, and I'm picking up on a trend here, there's a trend of we're done pushing things under the rug, we're getting rid of the rug. But, Michelle, before I elaborate on that terrible analogy even further, I want to pass you the mic on this kind of same question. What are we not talking about enough? What's still a barrier of entry to awareness for some of these challenges?

08:12:22

Yeah, I mean, just echoing what's been said, like the importance of education and being able to have conversations, unfortunately, stigma also really prevents people from being able to access care. And so when we're thinking about barriers to one out of every two people are diagnosed with a mental health disorder in their lifetime. And on average, this, this figure is startling, on average, it's usually from onset of symptoms to treatment is about 11 years, and over half of those people don't receive treatment. And why I think that's so critical is it's what are the barriers that are preventing people to being able to gather their needs met, and it's really, a lot of it has to do with the systemic barriers of cost and insurance and these sorts of things. But then it's also the stigma and the lack of education, as well. And people, you know, I was sharing about, you know, in my own family like this, this old school view about talking about addiction, and then also with my, with my own father, and, you know, talking about suicide, and these sort of things like you kind of didn't do it back then. And so, you know, for us now, it's really important to have these critical conversations, because with education, education, in general, and a lot of times is the silver bullet if we're able to have these dialogues that we could realize that we're not alone and a lot of us are going through the same things. Listen, in Dr. RV, we're just sharing about all the people they know in their lives who have And I've been struggling with, you know, stillbirths and, and pregnancy issues and these sorts of things. And so when we can come together and have these conversations, it's power and numbers, and people don't feel so alone. And when we do that we can share services and support and resources to help get people care.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:14:13

Yeah, I think that was so well put, and I'm, I'm glad you even started to do my job and pull the threads from all three of our speakers together in terms of, we have to start with acknowledgement, before we can do any kind of education and bridge building, we just have to start by acknowledging that yeah, this might be an uncomfortable subject to talk about, but we're gonna go there, because it's important to go there. So we've learned about each of these different cause wonderful cause areas wonderful and pressing cause areas, we've learned about some of the challenges still impacting the space. So I want to try and switch gears a little bit, because we have a lot of really passionate and dedicated business professionals on the line right now. And we have even more who will be listening to the recording of this following the event. And so I want to try and move us into a space where we can talk openly about what are the opportunities for people to get involved with your organization's if folks are passionate about giving back and assisting with mental health care access, with maternal health care access, with assisting families who are dealing with an unimaginable loss? How can folks easily get involved? And so I'll make my question a little bit more specific. Are there any areas of support that your organization is currently looking for from skilled business professionals? And I'm open to anyone jumping in. So unmute yourself, if you're, if you have any needs that a business professional could jump in to assist your organization with Michelle, that's up to you,

08:15:55

I would just say what aren't we looking for, we are always looking for support and, and next on the line too, if Nick wants to jump in at all, but we were looking for so many roles like podcast production, video editing, email marketing, HR, volunteer recruitment, community outreach, Google ads, public and media relations, fundraising, always fundraising, social media, event management, project management, we have just over about 100 skilled volunteers that include students and interns and volunteers. And so we are a team that really relies on the support of our skilled volunteers. And so we do have a lot of opportunities, we'll put some some links in the chat. And also, if you go to together well.org, we have a volunteer page where you can learn a bit more about our volunteering program that we have as well. But really, our volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization that keeps it moving so that we can move our mission forward. So so we have a bevy of opportunities, so definitely check us out.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:17:07

Great. And actually, on that note, I realized in my logistics rundown before, I did not share this important fact, following this event, along with the recording, you're also going to receive a rundown of how you can get in touch with each of these nonprofits and some of the different need areas they have. And so if you're sitting on the line, and you're thinking, ooh, you know what, I don't actually have Google ads or SEO skills that Michelle just call that her organization is needing, but I do have a network. And in my network, I might have people who can help. That's a form of you stepping up to support these causes as well. So consider, consider options don't feel pinned in to just the specific topics that are being named. Mmm hmm. All right. Dr. Already, I saw you nodding your head and a lot of what Michelle was just sharing. So I'm wondering if there's overlapping volunteer needs that were mentioned?

08:18:00

Yes, yes. And I would say at the forefront would be like she said, fundraising. We just started in March of this year. So fundraising is like the biggest thing for us to be able to carry out all of the things that we would like to carry out. And so we do have an event planned in December. For fundraising. It's going to be like our first fundraising event. So we would love to have as much help support guidance as it's our first one to, you know, carry that. And then of course, like social media, I feel like you just that's just like where a bulk of people are just on their phones. That's how they engage a lot of times. And like she said, the email marketing, like the blast email I was like just helping us identify volunteers, sponsorships, partnerships, and fundraising, those are like the biggest, the biggest things for us right now.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:19:05

Wonderful. And then Liz, if you could jump in and round us out

08:19:09

to you guess what I'm gonna say, fundraising, we do provide these packages to the hospitals at no cost as well as any community organizations or families that request them because we do ship them everywhere, throughout the US. So providing these packages is not cheap. One of our values is to buy the products from women in black owned businesses to reflect to Alia would have been as a young lady growing up in Washington, DC. So we are purchasing these products that are in the packages, as well as the books direct from the author. So really just trying to get different companies on board to want to have these packages for their employees is another element. So just kind of making a plan for that. So, you know, that's, I guess, a form of marketing, right, and any PR and media help. I've done a lot of PR here in DC. But you know, now that we are growing to Jersey, New York, Georgia, I'm looking for any opportunities nationwide to take this nationwide. So I would love anyone's help.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:20:21

Right. And I know I saw a few folks in the chat introduce themselves as being from Atlanta. So you might have some folks in that growing George from Marquette University is our newest partner. So that looks

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:20:33

fantastic. Yeah, that's great news. Congratulations, Sarah, if you're comfortable, I'd encourage you come off mute. And I saw that you post a really great question in the chat. And I'd encourage you to voice it live if you're comfortable. But yeah, go for it.

08:20:53

Sure. I'm Sarah, I'm with the American Dental Association and a newer tech group volunteer. And one of the things both at the EDA and in my volunteering that I've noticed is being very intentional about the way we describe sensitive issues, I think it's just the times that we're in, you know, we're trying to educate the public in general about the right way to describe people describe situations people find themselves in, and I found myself both having to educate myself and educate others on the right way to talk about it. And I just was in as a communications professional, that, you know, it's my job to be able to do that correctly. And I didn't know if you had any, any advice for volunteers who are working with you on projects.

08:21:54

Either way, you could go to, okay, so together well, it's really critical for because we're mental health and being able to, like you say, stay on top of language. And so we have created a content guide that helps our volunteers stay up to date with language, language is always evolving, and it's critical that we evolve with it. And so we actually have speakers come and actually talk about the topic as well. So for example, we had Dr. beggin O'Reilly at Stanford psychologist, Ted Talk speaker come talk about system centered language. So we make sure that we are continuously learning, but I think it's exactly what you said, Sarah, it's about our own continued self reflection, as well as being able to educate others. And when we hear something, it's about being able to correct that in a way that can is supportive, and so that people can hear because the minute there's sort of like a judgment, put on it, you know, people kind of shut down. So it's really critical to create a space, even before the incident occurs, or the language is said, to create that environment where people feel safe enough to challenge and explain in a way that supportive, because that's how we all learn and and that's really the spirit together well, to I make that really clear. We're a team environment, please correct me if I say something incorrectly, I hate grammar, please correct my grammar, you know, it's just also part of, you know, I'll use an ellipses or an emoji any day, you know, but a comma. So it's really important that we really instill that in our values of our organization period. Yeah.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:23:35

First Draft thinking first draft speaking is okay, as long as there's that openness to learn if maybe your first draft wasn't, wasn't spot on. But already I want to make sure you have a chance to to jump in.

08:23:48

Oh, no, Sarah, that was a wonderful question. I appreciate you asking that. And even though we don't Have like we got our first volunteer like a few weeks ago, and she's just gonna be remotely helping us with trying to help us with social media, but what I was gonna say we haven't gotten there yet. But whenever we do, like speak on our podcast or anything else, we always have like an expert, and we have two maternal mental health therapists on our board. And so they helped guide us with proper language and things to use along the way. So, we do have that, but that's very important to bring up and like Dr. Michelle has a guide when we do get there. Um, that is something that we will need to implement. So thank you.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:24:36

Great. And Liz, I saw you unmute yourself. So please jump in.

08:24:41

Yeah, so absolutely, totally agree with with both panelists. And I think also in this pregnancy and infant loss space, I've learned a lot since becoming a part of it. And part of that is, each experience is so different. And the way parents react to how you describe their loss, can can either really help them along their journey, or really invalidate their entire experience. And so I think just asking, how do you describe your loss? How do you describe what happened to you is huge. It's also really important, at least in this space, when dealing with folks is to avoid, you know, quotes, like everything happens for a reason, or God makes decisions, you know, things like that with that might not resonate with everyone when you say those things. And so to just be very, very direct, and even ask the individual, how do you view your loss? Because maybe they do share some of those views. And if they don't, that could cause a lot of issues. So I just think asking questions, and kind of like what Dr. Already said earlier. A lot of times people may feel uncomfortable asking or they don't want to rock the boat or anything. And and as I know, I can only speak for myself, but as a lost mom, I welcome these questions. And I welcome talking about Alia. I mean, I named it an organization after her. So I welcome talking about my child every chance that I get. And I find that not everyone, but a lot of other lost parents are in that same feel that same way. Yeah, I think that's so important.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:26:35

One of the first points you named, even though there's communities of people that have been impacted or affected by each of these separate health care challenges, does not mean that they're operating as a monolith. They're each having their own individual experience. And we need to really respect that it's going to be an individual experience, and not trying to apply the same conversation tactic or solution to every single person and remain really people centric in our approach. So I really, really appreciate each of your thoughtful responses there, Sarah, hopefully that was a good answer to your question. It sounds like we've got another question from Michelle in the chat, who's calling out the her love for the speakers. That's great. Thank you, Michelle. And she said that she noticed that there's this common trend of this need for fundraising support. And yes, Michelle, I think you're spot on that this is a pretty universal need across nonprofits regardless of size or mission. And your question was around if taproot has research around how individuals feel about this. So we do have research around the nonprofit need for fundraising, as well as different types of business areas support, we conducted a survey back in the tail end of 2020, to kind of gauge nonprofit response post, the first wave of the pandemic. And Megan, I believe that resources on our site, it's, it should be nonprofit resiliency survey, key takeaways, and we'd be happy to share those out. There's some interesting factoids in there, around the nonprofit need. But what I think is really interesting, because I feel like most folks on the line here who are joining from a volunteer perspective, some might have nonprofit fundraising experience, but most of you probably don't, most of you are coming with experience from the corporate space or the private sector, and are thinking through well, how do I apply my corporate experience to this really specific nonprofit need? And trust me, there are huge ways in which you could be an as a resource, you heard each of our panelists today, remark on, well, we do need fundraising support, but it kind of boils down to, we need all of these different aspects of marketing support, we need email marketing, we need social media strategy. We need PR, we need an overall marketing plan to kind of move these wheels all in the same direction.

And so that's what I would encourage you to start thinking of how can you as a volunteer, start building the capacity of nonprofits, like the ones on this call, for them to be able to get their word out and to reach more people and to serve more people, you don't have to be stressed about doing the actual work yourself? You're just getting to build up their capacity to do that work in an even better, more effective way. So hopefully, that's helpful. Oh, yeah, you've got sales experience. So you're right on. And like I said, We'll share direct opportunities for you to engage with these organizations in our follow up note after this call. So we did have one other questions submitted beforehand that I want to make sure we have a chance to touch on but please, if you do have any other questions, don't be a stranger, throw them in the chat or the q&a. And we should have time to get to them on the call. But one that was submitted in advance was right, kind of related to Michelle, your question in the chat around? Are there any special considerations that volunteer should keep in mind when giving back or trying to give back to nonprofits like yours? Are there any special considerations that they should have? If they're trying to work with a healthcare nonprofit organization? Dr. Healy, I might switch up the order and direct this towards you first, if you don't mind.

08:30:48

Yeah, I, I think, some consideration, something that I've noticed when people have wanted to join is sometimes there's a concern, can volunteer and be somewhat flexible? Or how many hours do I have to do? And I mean, sharing one hour of your skilled gift can go a long way. So that's, that's one thing is I wouldn't be worried, oh, I can't do a 40 hour week volunteering, you know, mental health nonprofits, like we, you know, we're, we're a lot like other types of nonprofits. And so, you know, an hour walking a dog versus an hour working on content writing or fundraising like it, it's, it's all worth it. So definitely don't shy away. The other piece, I would say is because of our particular nonprofit kind of piggybacks on Sarah's question about being able to be open to language, you know, it's there's also the element of like, respect in for different values and belief systems and things like that. So, but together, while we really do work in a team capacity in order to move things along, because we don't have any part time or full time staff, and so the ability to work collaboratively with other volunteers, is really critical. And so having sort of that, that team spirit, so to speak, is, is really helpful. And we do have people who work independently on projects, but it you know, it's like what doctor already said, like, you know, once you have a product, then that gets reviewed by a psychologist as well. And so there there is a chain, to make sure that everything that's produced is top notch. So being able to kind of work in that team environment, accept feedback and grow with us is really what we what we need and our particular nonprofit.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:32:37

Yeah, I really want to underline what you just said at the end their readiness to grow with us. When you're going into volunteer, especially pro bono consulting, the skills based volunteerism, you should expect it to be a two way learning Street. Obviously, the nonprofit is going to learn a ton from you as a highly skilled professional, but you are going to learn a ton from the nonprofit as well. And so be open for that be prepared for that. It'll be a fun process. But Dr. Bernardo, Liz, want to give you an opportunity to answer that question as well. If you have any thoughts, are there any special considerations that folks should have in mind when volunteering with a healthcare nonprofit like yours?

08:33:24

Um, that's you don't necessarily have to have a medical background to do it. And just to follow up on what Dr. Michelle said, just knowing that even if you have like that our like, we're appreciative of anything that you're able to contribute. To us your contribution means so much and it's, it's taking it off of off of us to do because we have other responsibilities. Ladies as well, working being a mom of three, everything else, so it's actually helping us out. And, you know, I know my shortcomings and I'm not going to pretend like I know how to do everything. So me reaching out is because I acknowledge that I don't I don't know anything about this, just like with the grant writing with the website, with all those things like I that's foreign to me. So I welcome any and all help. And whatever you're able to do is appreciative. So completely agree. You know, I have no business background, my background is elementary education and being with six year olds for almost 10 years. So stepping into this space, I'm doing everything that I can to learn. And I think what I've been telling all my volunteers, even most of them have do have some connection to the space. But for the ones that don't, and question like, Oh, is it okay, if I step into the space? Yes, we're all learning as we go. I am learning every day, I'm taking every class, every webinar that I possibly can. I'm back at GW for business classes to learn. And so I think just realizing that this is a learning space where I hope that nobody acts like they have all the answers, because I don't think any of us do, and it's a collaborative space. And I feel like with my volunteers, that I have been a taproot volunteer that I met yesterday, we are just collaborating on these efforts to reach more people and do what we know needs to be done.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:35:32

Right? Right. It's really critical work, and all are welcome to get involved. And so that I think continues the through line that we started the beginning of, we want to lower barrier to entry here, everyone should feel welcome to get involved in whatever way they feel comfortable and confident, stepping up and getting involved. So I want to be cognizant of time, because we have about five minutes left, we will be sending out plenty of great follow up materials, information for how you can get directly connected with each of our nonprofit speakers on the line. But in these closing minutes, I want to give the mic to our speakers. So you each have a moment to share any final advice or encouragement you have for people who might be looking to get involved in this space. So open question, or whatever one of our panelists wants to jump in and offer some closing wisdom.

08:36:35

Just in my closing, I think everybody that is on here has a mother or knows a mom. And so I challenge you to just see how you can be more supportive, even in the things you say, I don't know, there's an old saying Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me. And that could be not farther from the truth. And so watch what you say. There are mean things that are said and some things don't even have to be said, you see a pregnant woman Oh, are you having twins, not something you say. Um, so if you can just, you know, in addition to the things that we said that we're in need of volunteer wise, even just day to day, things that you can do when you do come across a mom in a grocery store, on a plane, at a park, wherever you are, try not to judge them be kind, we never know what we would do if we were in their shoes. So my thing is, is if you're not going to help, then just leave it alone. So those are just my final words that I want to offer to everyone just to kind of, you know, kind of change that whole environment that we create for moms and families of the sort at a restaurant, wherever you are. Just be more aware and conscientious of the words, your actions. And thank you guys again. And thank you volunteers for hopping on other panelists that I'm here with. I'm so honored, and especially with us being so new. So I just want to say thank you. Thank you for that already. Yeah, I mean, I think that was very well said, and thank you so much taproot for having me here. I was so happy when I got you know, the email and so I'm just happy that I could share it not only about Alia, in action, but just this process in general. And it's so great to see people interested in how they can get involved in different organizations. And I think going back to what we were just talking about, there is a space for everyone. And even if you can only give 20 minutes of solid advice or 20 minutes of hey, I found this template that's good for you. That is huge. For now nonprofits like us, where we are just trying to take anything we can get to make us bigger and better. So the fact that so many people have joined today, I think is huge. And thank you. And it's just been an honor to be here and speak with these lovely ladies.

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:39:08

Thank you for that list. Michelle, what about from your end?

08:39:12

Yeah, I appreciate everybody for being here and wonderful panelists that had been joined with today and taproot for hosting this event for everybody. So just a lot of gratitude. And so, yeah, email us at volunteer with together well.org. If you're interested, you can also check out our ads on tap group, in addition to coming to together well, that Oregon looking at our volunteer page for opportunities. And when it comes to mental health, not being afraid to have conversations about it, the more we stay silent, the more stigma wins. Right. And so the other piece, I would say that I think is really critical. And murgee asked this question in the chat regarding the role of the nonprofit sector and, and kind of the concern re of it sort of being a BandAid on a gunshot wound in a way like the healthcare system, you know, isn't doing his job. And then our nonprofits are like trying to hold it together, right, when it's bursting at the seams. I think that's really critical. And so part of that is being able to advocate, talk to policymakers, something that I did was reach out to Senator Feinstein's office and advocate for the black maternal mental health Mahmoud Abbas act to get rid of cosign that so we can all do something to help support to create policy change. And that's really critical. And so I do think that it is an issue that in some ways nonprofits are having to take care of issues that maybe the government's not so it's really about. It's an an though, because it takes time to create change. as we know, mental health is a big topic in our in our, in our world right now. And there's a lot going on with that. And so, so we do need nonprofits, and we need to be able to effectively create change from a system. So yeah, that's what I would say,

**Kimberly Swartz** 08:41:07

yeah, it doesn't have to be an either or it can be a both. And yeah, so I really liked that you, you approach it from that angle. And I encourage everyone on the line and who's watching this recording back to approach it from that angle as well. All right, everyone, we're going to end it here. So I want to say one final, thank you. Thank you, thank you to all three of our lovely panelists. And I know I learned so much from each of you and your unique approaches to these different issues. And so really appreciate you taking the time to share your expertise with all of us. And thank you so much for the folks who joined us live the folks who are watching this back at a later date. We appreciate you taking the time to dig in on this issue. And we appreciate you in advance for getting connected with organizations like the three of these on the line with us today. Because the need is there and you have the power to make a difference here. So let's all commit to taking action and owning that power and the responsibility we have in this space. Alright everyone. With that, I'm going to end it here. Thank you so much, and I hope you have a great rest of your day. Bye now.