Cultural and Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care

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Survey Questions

1. I believe spiritual care is integral part of patient centered care. True or False

2. I believe that spiritual care can be part of the care that I provide. True or False

3. Of the following statements, identify the top three that might prevent you from providing spiritual care for a patient.

#1 Not enough time
#2 Lack of private space to discuss these matters with my patients
#3 I have not received adequate training
#4 I believe that spiritual care is better done by others on the health care team
#5 I am worried that patients will feel uncomfortable
#6 I feel uncomfortable engaging these issues with patients whose religious/spiritual beliefs may differ from my own
#7 I am personally uncomfortable discussing spiritual issues
#8 I do not believe it is my professional role to engage patient spirituality
#9 I am worried that the power inequity between patient and (nurse/doctor) makes spiritual care inappropriate
#10 Religion/spirituality is not important to me personally
#11 I do not believe cancer patients want spiritual care from (nurses/doctors)

Cultural

Culture includes: Knowledge, beliefs, morals, law, customs
Culture reflects an ideal system of shared ideas, values, concepts
Culture is influence by history, economy, social political contexts
Culture influences our lifestyle and interactions
Madeleine Leininger’s Theory of Culture Care: Diversity and Universality

- **Caring** is an action or activity directed towards providing care.
- **Culture** refers to learned, shared, and transmitted values, beliefs, norms, and lifeways of a specific individual or group that guide their thinking, decisions, actions, and patterned ways of living.
- **Cultural care** refers to multiple aspects of culture that influence and enable a person or group to improve their human condition or to deal with illness or death.


**Spirituality**

Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature and to the significant or sacred.

*J of Pall Med, Making Health Care Whole, 2010*

**Religion**

- Focuses on the defined structures, rituals, doctrines and disciplines that offer meaning to existence and point to God.
- Was inseparable from medicine for millennia.
- Concept of Spirituality is a contemporary bridge between medicine and religion.

Vandecreek, 2001

**One can be spiritual and not religious**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>A person’s inner belief system</td>
<td>A construct of human making</td>
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<tr>
<td>A person’s philosophy of life and world view</td>
<td>The externals of our belief system: building, prayers, rites, rituals</td>
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<td>One component of culture</td>
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Responding to our Spirituality

- Emotional response, which can include feelings of significance, unity, awe, joy, acceptance, and consolation.
- Cognitive response, a set of beliefs and thoughts about oneself and the world
- Behavioral response, spiritual practices
  - meditation
  - singing
  - dancing
  - prayer
  - rituals
  - ceremonies

Religious/Spiritual Needs to Consider

- Gender
- Dietary Requirements
- Dress & Modesty
- Hygiene & Washing Requirements
- Informed Consent & Patient Decision Making
- Prayer & Ritual Observances
- Traditional & Alternative Remedies
- Blood & Blood Products
- Organ Transplants & Donations
- Acceptance of Drugs & Certain Procedures
- End of Life

Community-based Connections

...to name only a few.

Imams and the Islamic Center
Jehovah Witnesses
Mormon Elders
Native Traditional Medicine Men
Rabbi's
Sikh Leaders
Wiccan

Man is not destroyed by suffering; he is destroyed by suffering without meaning”

Victor Frank

Spiritual Distress

Spiritual distress and spiritual crisis occur when individuals are unable to find sources of meaning, hope, love, peace, comfort, strength and connection in life or when conflict occurs between their beliefs and what is happening in their life.

10 MOST COMMON VERY IMPORTANT WISHES AT FIRST AND SECOND TEST

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>1st Test</th>
<th>2nd Test</th>
<th>Correlation*</th>
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1. To be at peace with God
2. To pray
3. To have my family with me.
4. To be free from pain
5. Not being a burden to my family.
6. To trust my doctor.
7. To keep my sense of humor.
8. To say goodbye to important people in my life.
9. To have my family prepared for my death.
10. To be able to help others.
**Interdisciplinary Spiritual Care**

- General spiritual care is recognizing and responding to the “multifaceted expressions of spirituality we encounter in our patients and their families.”
- It involves compassion, presence, listening and the encouragement of realistic hope, and may or may not involve any discussion of God or religion.
- General spiritual care may be provided by anyone.
- Specialized spiritual care often involves understanding and helping with specific theological beliefs and conflicts.
- Spiritual assessment is the process by which health care providers can identify a patient’s spiritual needs pertaining to medical care.
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### Case Study

**Down to The River to Pray**

- Mr. A is a 77 year old male with renal cell carcinoma metastatic to lymph nodes and bones admitted with pain, constipation, failure to thrive
- He and his wife have been married 52 years.
- He has 2 adult children as well as 2 grandchildren
- He is retired and currently is the vice president of the board of directors for his neighborhood home owners association.

- Mr. A shares that he has made the decision to resign from his position and is experiencing this as a very significant loss because of the enjoyment he receives from his work in this position.
- Mr. A is of the Roman Catholic faith and his spirituality is a very important part of his coping.
- Music has been significant throughout the patient's life. He sang in church, community and family choirs throughout his youth and adult life. Patient chose to share some of his favorite songs and their significance for him.
The First Baptism

I had 33 years singing in the choir.
I sing bass.
"Going Down to the River to Prayer" is a special song.
We sang it once, last year, with the full choir.

My image is of the one woman in the picture
Holding the toddler at the end, by the water.
That's special because it seems to bring out
Everything about the whole picture.
It's everything I would have in my mind
Of the First Baptism, with John the Baptist.
It seems to bring together everything meaningful
In the Catholic faith.

In the first verse of the song,
We've got the one woman who starts out solo,
And she'd be singing about the good old ways.
She says, "Lord show me the way,"
And that's what I feel this whole thing is about.

In the next verse, she says,
"Brothers and sisters, let's go down."
It's a repetition.
But it's with all different people,
From different walks of life.

I was baptized back in 1936,
And that was 78 years ago, almost exactly.
I was three months old.
That is special because of the way they had to present at that time.
I was held over a font,
And water was poured over me,
And words were said over me.
Versus, how people had to walk into the water
At the time of the First Baptism.

This image is more recent for me.
It could be more or less of a rebirth,
For if—and when—
I'm gone from this earth.

-Dr. Marcia Brennan