Spiritual Assessment: Whose Line Is It Anyway?

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Objectives
1. Why spiritual assessment?
2. What is spiritual assessment?
3. Difference between spirituality and religion
4. Goals of spiritual assessment
5. Exercise
6. What is spiritual care?
7. Who provides spiritual care?
8. Spiritual issues and questions and addressing them
9. Exercise
10. Summary on addressing spiritual issues

Why Spiritual Assessment?

• In 2001 JCAHO revised its accreditation standards and required the health care administrations to conduct spiritual assessment. Therefore, Spiritual assessment became mandated in healthcare settings including hospitals, hospices, home care organizations, long term-care facilities, etc..

Why Spiritual Assessment?

David Hodge reports that “Research indicates that most practitioners have received little, if any, training on spirituality and religion during their graduate training.”


Table 1: Spiritual Assessment Questions Provided by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

| 1. Who or what provides the patient with strength and hope? |
| 2. Does the patient use prayer in their life? |
| 3. How does the patient express their spirituality? |
| 4. How would the patient describe their philosophy of life? |
| 5. What type of spiritual/religious support does the patient desire? |
| 6. What is the name of the patient’s clergy, ministers, chaplains, parish, rabbi? |
| 7. What does suffering mean to the patient? |
| 8. What does dying mean to the patient? |
| 9. What are the patient’s spiritual goals? |
| 10. Is there a role of church/synagogue in the patient’s life? |
| 11. Has belief in God been important in the patient’s life? |
| 12. How does your faith help the patient cope with illness? |
| 13. How does the patient keep going day after day? |
| 14. What helps the patient get through this health care experience? |
| 15. How has illness affected the patient and his/her family? |


Table 2: Brief Assessment Model that Conforms to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations’ Spiritual Assessment Recommendations

1. I was wondering if spirituality or religion is important to you?
2. Are there certain spiritual beliefs and practices that you find particularly helpful in dealing with problems?
3. I was also wondering if you attend a church or some other type of spiritual community?
4. Are there any spiritual needs or concerns I can help you with?

What is Spiritual Assessment?

Spirituality:
Sermabeikin (1994) defines spirituality as a relationship with God or whatever is to be held Ultimate that fosters a sense of meaning, purpose and mission in life.


What is Spiritual Assessment?

“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.”

National Consensus Panel Report, Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care: The Report of the Consensus Conference, October, 2009.

What is Spiritual Assessment?

Spiritual Assessment is the process of gathering, analyzing and synthesizing spiritual and religious information into a specific framework that provides basis for, and gives direction to, subsequent practice decisions.


Difference between spirituality & religion

Religion
- From the Latin religare meaning “to bind together”
- More structured belief system
- Provides a framework for making sense of the meaning of existence
- Religious rites and rituals provide a concrete way of expressing spirituality
- Most religions expect general adherence to a particular body of beliefs (doctrines) regarding one’s relationship with God (by whatever name)
- Corporate (group based), structured, organized

Spirituality
- From the Latin spiritualitas meaning “breath”
- Personalized system of beliefs through which one understands meaning and purpose in life
- Free/open/dynamic; it develops and changes
- It may or may not be related to a higher power or a specific set of beliefs
- Most persons have a spiritual life

Religion and spirituality are not the same but are overlapping concepts.

Some people who see themselves as spiritual do not formally endorse a religion.

Some people who are religious are not spiritual.

Goals of Spiritual Assessment

• Invite Sharing.
• Learn about beliefs and values.
• Assess spiritual distress and spiritual sources of strength.
• Empower the patient to find inner resources of healing and acceptance.
• Learn about spiritual or religious beliefs that might affect health care.

Puchalski C, Spiritual Assessment in Clinical Practice. Psychiatric Annals: Mar 2006; 36:3 pg 150-155
FICA-Taking a Spiritual History

F—Faith and Belief
• “Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious?”
• “Do you have spiritual beliefs that help you cope with stress?”
• “What gives your life meaning?”

http://www2.edc.org/lastacts/archives/archivesNov99/assesstool.asp

I—Importance
• “What importance does your faith or belief have in your life?”
• “Have your beliefs influenced how you take care of yourself in this illness?”
• “What role do your beliefs play in regaining your health?”

http://www2.edc.org/lastacts/archives/archivesNov99/assesstool.asp

C—Community
• “Are you part of a spiritual or religious community?”
• “Is this of support to you and how?”
• “Is there a group of people you really love or who are important to you?”

http://www2.edc.org/lastacts/archives/archivesNov99/assesstool.asp

A—Address in Care
• “How would you like me, your healthcare provider, to address these issues in your healthcare.”
• EXAMPLES include: referral to chaplains, pastoral counselors, or spiritual directors, journaling, and music or art therapy.

http://www2.edc.org/lastacts/archives/archivesNov99/assesstool.asp

Exercise

A’s: Interview the person on your left (= B)
Experiment with finding your own comfortable way to ask the questions

B’s: It is your choice who to “be”: a patient, yourself, make something up, etc.

After 4 minutes, switch roles

End of Life Care by Stanford University:
http://www.growthhouse.org/stanford/elc_module7v8.ppt
Questions:

F: Faith or beliefs
“Tell me something about your faith or beliefs.”

I: Importance & influence
“How does this influence your health/well-being?”

C: Community
“Are you part of a supportive community?”

A: Address or application
“How would you like me to address these issues in your health care?”

Interventions:

- “This is very important for you.”
- “This is a real source of strength for you, isn’t it?”
- “It takes courage to grapple with these things.”
- Share your beliefs as appropriate (do not impose)
- Facilitate environmental support for ritual
- Refer to a chaplain as appropriate

Don’t forget that you are not being asked to provide spiritual care. However, you are in a unique place to assess potential spiritual care needs, and to refer to the Spiritual Care Staff/chaplains.

What is Spiritual Care?

Spiritual care is to assist and witness patients’ struggle in maintaining personal realization of one’s own spirituality and understanding of one’s placement toward the desired state of well-being. By leaning on one’s personal, faith, cultural and community resources, the chaplain ministers to the existential, spiritual and emotional needs of patients and their care providers. This ministerial task may take different forms including:

- Spiritual Assessment by supportive, compassionate and affirming listening
- Performing rituals or help connecting with the faith community
- Providing spiritual readings and spiritual consultation
- Creating sacred space for patient to review life story in order to discover personal strength and constructive spiritual tools used in previous life struggles
- Leading and teaching meditation to create daily relaxing and reflective environment and as a way to self-control
- Use of game, art and music therapy
- If requested to provide prayers

A chaplain assists with

- Loss, grief & bereavement
- Spiritual distress
- Meaning making crisis
- Feelings of alienation from faith and abandonment by God
- Advocacy
- Ethics

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Requirements to become a chaplain

Chaplains have extensive education and training in addressing the needs of patients and their families, and especially those at the end-of-life. A board certified chaplain holds Master level theological training, minimum of 4 units or 1 + year of Clinical Pastoral Education, ecclesiastical endorsement by their faith community for specialized ministry and board certification as a chaplain by a nationally accrediting body such as the Association of Professional Chaplains.

Who provides spiritual care

Chaplains: ordained ministers who are trained and specialized to see patients of any religious or non-religious background.

Clergy: ordained and trained ministers/pastors in religious care, and work predominately with patients from their own religious denomination.

Pastoral counselors: master’s- or doctoral-trained counselors; half of their training is in how spiritual and religious issues affect manifestation of and coping with the presenting symptoms.

Spiritual Directors: Individuals (not counselors) trained to assist people in their spiritual journey by helping them discern how God or the divine is working in their lives.

Spiritual Issues

- Pain, constant and chronic
- Insomnia
- Withdrawal or isolation with spiritual support system
- Conflict with family members, friends or support staff
- Anxiety, fear, mistrust of family, friends, physicians, hospice staff
- Anger
- Depression
- Guilt/low self-worth, comments about self-loathing
- Hopelessness
- Feeling of failure with life
- Lack of a sense of humor
- Unforgivingness
- Despair
- Fear/dread

Spiritual Questions

- Why me?
- Is my illness a punishment?
- Why was I placed on earth?
- Is there hope?
- How do I forgive?
- What will the last hours of life be like?
- Will death hurt? Will I have to suffer?
- Why do I have to suffer?
- What is the purpose of dragging out my life?
- I don’t want to live without a certain quality of life
- Is it OK to say goodbye, to let go?
- Is there a God?
- What happens after death?
- Will I be punished or forgiven for my sins?
- Will I be alone?
- Will I be remembered?

How to address spiritual questions

- Listen to and explore the patient’s views allow the person to narrate or paint their own image
- Do not try to provide answer as the question itself is a sign of grief; allow the patient to manifest grief
- Do not impose your culture, values and beliefs
- Recognize and focus on the main issues and concerns
- Help the patient find answers and solutions which address his/her concerns based on their own spiritual and religious values and beliefs
- Work to assure the patient’s dignity

"Illness is both soul-shaking and soul-evoking for the patient and for all others for whom the patients matters. We lose innocence, we know vulnerability, we are no longer who we were before this event, and we will never be the same."


Exercise

- Which three events/experiences have shaped your life the most?
  - What are the three things which motivate you the most?
  - What are the three things which give you the most meaning to your life?
  - What do you consider the three core values that you use to guide you in your life?
  - What are the three happiest events in your life?
  - What are the three most painful / saddest events in your life?

Adapted from: HILLEL BODEK, MSW, LCSW-R, BCD
Comprehensive Training Program in Palliative and End-of-Life Care Spirituality Questionnaire-Exercise

http://www.growthhouse.org/spirit/files/bodek_spirituality_questionnaire_exercise_for clergypdf
Under the light of our own inevitable death approaching with each breath, how as professional care providers we provide holistic and meaningful care for our patients?

What makes a “good death”

- Pain & symptom management
- Clear decision making
- Preparation for death
- Completion
- Contributing to others
- Affirmation of the whole person

Steinhauer et al. Annals Intern Med 2000 (Durham VA) Good death as defined by physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, hospice volunteers, patients, bereaving family (N=75)

Summary on addressing spiritual issues

- Be human. Be real. Be honest. Be sensitive to our differences
- Be present and listen. Emphasis on being (with), not doing, i.e. you don’t have to fix it, or have ‘the answers’
- Spiritual pain management – frees up the patient to address spiritual/psychological concerns and to bring closure in those areas.
- Acknowledge the reality of spiritual pain – out loud!
- Assess for spiritual pain with simple questions like: “Do you have any spiritual or religious concerns at this point?” and “Are there spiritual resources, or is there a religious community, that could be a help to you at this time?”
- Respect the patient’s belief system, regardless of one’s own feelings about religion and spirituality.
- Provide access to spiritual resources by referring to the hospital chaplain, the hospice chaplain, the patient’s parish priest, minister, rabbi, imam, etc.


Cited References


What do you want your legacy to be after you die?

- List three ways your being a [hospice setting clinician] has affected your life?
- If you learned that you were terminally ill and had only a few months to live, what three things would you fear most about your impending death?
- If you had a chronic illness and knew that you were now in the final days of your life, what are the four most important thing you would want your health care professionals (doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains) to do for you during these final days?
- Describe the role of spirituality in your life.

By: HILLEL BODEK, MSW, LCSW

Comprehensive Training Program in Palliative and End of Life Care SPIRITUALITY QUESTIONNAIRE-EXERCISE http://www.growthhouse.org/spirituality/questionnaire-exercise_for_clergy.pdf
Cited References

http://www.jointcommission.org/AccreditationPrograms/HomeCare/Standards/09_FAQs/PCC精神评估.htm

National Consensus Panel Report, Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care: The Report of the Consensus Conference, October, 2009.

http://www2.edc.org/lastacts/archives/archivesNov99/assesstool.asp


http://cancer-research.umaryland.edu/spirituality.htm

Steinhauser et al. Annals Intern Med 2000 (Durham VA)

Good death as defined by physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, hospice volunteers, patients, bereaving family (N=75)

Suggested Readings

End of Life Palliative Education Resource Center:
http://www.eperc.mcw.edu/fastFact/ff_019.htm

Growth House: http://www.growthhouse.org/spirit/ Growth House provides several spiritual care training modules and assessment tools for palliative and end of life care.


Koenig, H. M.D., Center for the Study of Religion/Spirituality and Health, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina: Spiritual Assessment in Medical Practice:


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