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# Standing on Sacred Ground: Integrating Spirituality and Mental Health

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Rabbi Elisa Goldberg



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# Last session we discussed....

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- Spiritual types
- Spiritual Development (Fowler)
- Countertransference
- What sustains our spirits



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# Identifying Healthy and Unhealthy Beliefs

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Sometimes spiritual beliefs and activities can be unhelpful or damaging. Here are some questions to help you assess healthy and unhealthy beliefs. These questions are just the beginning of a dialogue that takes into account the wide variety of spiritual, religious, and cultural norms.

- Do beliefs cause pain and suffering or peace and acceptance?
- Do beliefs help one connect to community, hope, justice or morals?
- Do beliefs foster a sense of interconnectedness?
- Do beliefs reinforce self-centeredness or connection to other people?



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# Comfort vs. Anguish

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	Comfort	Anguish
Views of Self	Strengthen self-regard Child of God Connected to a higher power	Self-loathing Unforgivable Sickness is due to weak faith
Coping Resources	Private devotional activities help with symptoms	Compulsive ritual behavior Negative religious coping
Community	Connected to community Practical help	Estranged, rejected, stigmatized Abused
Future Story	Faith	Despair



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# Spiritual Values

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Spirituality can be characterized not only by beliefs and practices, but also by “fruits of the spirit.”

## Spiritual Values:

- |              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| • Kindness   | compassion | generosity |
| • Tolerance  | patience   | honesty    |
| • Creativity | joy        | humility   |
| • Wisdom     |            |            |

## Spiritual skills:

- Being able to create a still, peaceful state of mind (as in meditation)
- Developing above-average levels of empathy
- Discernment and courage
- Sustaining hope in difficult times
- Being able to grieve appropriately and let go

-Larry Culliford



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# Measures of Spirituality

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Spiritual Quest – searching for meaning/purpose in life, finding answers to the mysteries of life, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life.

Equanimity – feels peace or centered, able to find meaning in times of hardship, sees each day as a gift, feels good about the direction of their life.

Ethics of Caring – commitment to values such as healing others in difficulty, reducing suffering in the world, and making the world a better place.

Charitable Involvement – participating in community service, donating money to charity and helping friends with personal problems.

Ecumenical Worldview – interested in difference, feels strong connection to all humanity, believes in the goodness of all people, believes love is the root of all religion.

*- Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2011*



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# Spiritual Assessment Tools

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1. Awareness of the holy
2. Providence - how does trust or hope function?
3. Faith - to what does one commit oneself?
4. Grace or gratefulness - for what is the client grateful?
5. Repentance - how does this person manage transgression and guilt?
6. Communion - where is this person's sense of community?
7. Vocation - what purpose is found in this person's life and work?

*The Minister as Diagnostician (Pruyser, 1976)*



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# Brief Assessment

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If your time is limited and you only have time to ask one specific question about spirituality, consider one of the following:

- Are you at peace? This question has been found in the research to be a useful means for determining if someone is in spiritual distress.
- What gives you your sense of meaning and purpose? What really matters to you in your life?



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# Assessment Tools – FICA (Puchalski & Romer, 2000)

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**F – Faith, Belief, Meaning:** “What are the things that help you cope with stress and bring meaning to your life?”

**I – Importance or Influence of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices:** “How do your beliefs affect your ability to care for your self?”

**C – Community connections:** “Are you part of a spiritual or religious community? Is this of support to you and how?”

**A – Address in Care** “How would you like me, to address these issues in your treatment?”



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# Ways to begin the conversation

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- 1) What role, if any, does religion or spirituality play in your life? Would you describe yourself as religious or spiritual?
- 2) Have you ever felt connected to something beyond yourself, a moment of transcendence?
- 3) What did you learn from that experience? How could that knowledge help you now?
- 4) What gives your life meaning? How do you understand your situation in light of what's most important in your life?
- 5) From where do you draw strength and solace?
- 6) Is there anything else you would like me to know about the role of spirituality in your life and recovery?



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# Discussion

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Resources - From where do you draw strength, solace and hope?

Cope - How does these resources help you cope with your challenges?

Treatment - How should we include this awareness in your treatment?



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# Case Study Template

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- 1) Identify client's spiritual resources and dilemmas
- 2) Consider opportunities for client's spiritual growth
- 3) Check for spiritual countertransference
- 4) Identify clinical strategies for spiritual care



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# Integrating Your Learning

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How will you implement what you learned in your work?

What will you do differently tomorrow?



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# Goals of Spiritually-Oriented Care

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- ✧ Help people access their own spirituality as a source of strength
- ✧ Identify negative beliefs and spiritual dilemmas that create pain
- ✧ Develop supportive beliefs and resolve spiritual contradictions
- ✧ Bring awareness to the spiritual dimension of life
- ✧ Make meaning out of life's losses
- ✧ Embrace supportive spiritual practices.
- ✧ Connect to deepest values, beliefs, and hopes for the future



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# Best Practices

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- 1) Assess and Discuss Spirituality
- 2) Incorporate into Treatment Plan
- 3) Address Countertransference
- 4) Create Culture of Acceptance



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# Know Your Limitations

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- ✓ Do not prescribe religion to non-religious patients.
- ✓ Do not force a spiritual history if patient not religious.
- ✓ Do not coerce patients in any way to believe or practice.
- ✓ Do not spiritually counsel patients unless you are trained to do so (always refer to trained professional chaplains or pastoral counselors).
- ✓ Do not do any activity that is not patient-centered or patient-directed.



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# Where we've been

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- definitions of spirituality
- difference between spirituality and religion - sp broader
- quick overview research
- Wrote our own definitions
- Saw spirituality is broad, universal and particular.
- Spiritual types
- Spiritual development
- Countertransference
- Toxic Spirituality
- Tools for addressing spirituality



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# What gives you hope?

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# Closing Reflection

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Source of Life make me an instrument of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me sow love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
And where there is sadness, joy

Holy One grant that I may  
not so much seek to be consoled, as to console  
to be understood, as to understand  
To be loved, as to love  
For it is in giving, that we receive  
And it is in pardoning, that we are pardoned



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*Adapted from St Francis of Assisi*