

Spirituality: An Essential Human Need

By Mary Knutson, RN, MSN

Guidelines for Nursing Assessment

- Be aware of your own feelings about spirituality
- Recognize that all people may experience spiritual distress
- Holistic nursing includes identifying and planning for spiritual growth
- Convey a nonjudgmental, open-minded attitude about religious beliefs of individuals

Questions for Spiritual Assessment

- What in your life is meaningful and important?
- What do you do that gives you satisfaction?
- Who do you turn to when you need someone to listen, or to help you?

- Do you believe in a higher being? How do you describe this being?
- How do you connect?
- What activities bring you peace or relieve stress?
- What are your beliefs about death?



- Do you see a connection between mind, body, emotions, and soul?
- Is there anything you would like to have to support your beliefs and your spiritual needs?
- Would you like to arrange a visit from a spiritual leader?
- Are there any unconventional health practices you are considering?

Observations



- Listen for clues to spiritual distress:
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Anger toward God
 - Inability to forgive others
 - Feelings of hopelessness, uselessness or abandonment
 - Questions about the meaning of life, losses, or suffering

- Discuss any conflicts between values as actions are being planned
 - Time to oneself vs. caregiving time
 - Use of feeding tubes or extraordinary treatment
- Ask about any special religious considerations are not being addressed
 - Dietary practices or observance of religious holiday
- Discuss anything that interferes with spiritual needs
 - Noisy environment or lack of privacy

Role of Nursing



- Nurses identify unique patient needs that are not readily known
- Nurses become more skilled in discovering and meeting those needs as they initiate related discussions
- Nurses recognize that spirituality is an important part of being human

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