

General Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

Mario E Ceballos, D.Min, BCC

General Conference of the Seventh -day Adventist
Church Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Associate
Director

“A Religion of some kind is as essential to the mind of man as air is to respiration.”

Benjamin Rush, Father of American Psychiatry, 1745-1813

Spirituality and Healing

Anger/Hostility

Anger is a temporary emotion closely associated with pain.

Hostility is a long-term attitude that permeates life. The underlying premise is that life is not fair and others are mistreating you.

Spirituality and Healing

Forgiveness is accepting every human being as a struggling individual much like yourself, thus, becoming less critical and judgmental of others.

Stress



**Anxiety, depression, loneliness,
social isolation**



**Catecholamines and cortisone
production**



Suppression of the Immune System



**T-cell production suppress,
interferon. Macrophage**



**Acceleration of cancer and
progression of other disease**

Spirituality and Healing

- When we don't forgive, our bodies manufacture potent chemicals like adrenalin, noradrenalin, adrenocorticotrophic hormone and cortisone. Over time, these chemicals can build up in the blood stream producing tension-vascular headaches, back pain, gastric ulcer, or irritable bowel syndrome, and even heart disease.

Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

- The first step in assessing the spirituality of patients is for the clinician to have a good knowledge of the patient's basic moral and decision-making principles. Is there "case precedence" (known information about the patient's history and background – what has happened to him/her before)? Has the patient established "advanced directives" (AD – documented wishes for care if s/he becomes unable to communicate)? Is the patient a "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) protocol?

EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENTS

- Does a *spiritual connection* (SC) exist: Does the patient verbalize a need to connect with his/her own spirituality and/or spiritual support system?
- Is there a *spiritual or health concern* (SHC): Does the patient demonstrate anxiety regarding his/her hospitalization, illness and/or treatment plan? Does s/he have questions regarding his/her medical care or diagnosis?
- Is *spiritual support* (SS) a factor: Does the patient and/or family exhibit spiritual belief? Do they express trust in God? Do they desire prayers and wish to participate in their own religious rituals?

EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENTS

- Is the patient dealing with *spiritual dilemmas* (SD): Does s/he struggle with the meaning of life and death? Are there questions regarding God or a Higher Power? Are there spiritual dilemmas?
- Is the patient suffering *spiritual anxiety* (SA): Does s/he exhibit spiritual anxiety, grief symptoms, spiritual depression and /or alienation?
- Is the patient encountering *spiritual suffering* (SSU): Does s/he demonstrate spiritual withdrawal, loss of hope and belief and/or feelings of despair?

EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENTS

- Is *spiritual crisis intervention* (SCI) in order: Does an emergency or life-threatening situation exist? Is withdrawal of life support an issue? Is the patient near death or comatose, etc?
- Or, are *no spiritual concerns* (NSC) demonstrated or expressed by the patient: Has the patient or family not mentioned any spiritual needs? Has the patient or family verbalized that they feel no spiritual needs? Has the patient indicated no desire for spiritual care intervention?

Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

- The second step of the “Spiritual Assessment” involves assessing what the patient’s religious background and/or church of preference is. Does s/he belong to a spiritual community? Is prayer a source of strength for her/him? Is God a source of strength?

Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

- The third step in assessing the spirituality of patients is to determine if spirituality is a resource or hindrance in the healing or demise of the patient. Has spirituality been a positive force in the patient's life up till now? Is the patient's reference to spirituality one of connection to a beneficent higher power that can be turned to for help? Or is the patient's spiritual background wrought with painful memories? Has his/her experience up till now been negative? Does "spirituality" carry anxiety producing connotations for the patient that would stress his/her system and slow or block healing?

Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

- The fourth step in the patient spiritual assessment process is that of recording the findings and plan of care. If assessments and interventions are not communicated in writing, as far as the medical/legal community is concerned, it is as if they had never occurred.

Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

Great wisdom is needed in dealing with disease... If their faith can be directed to the true Physician... this will bring relief to the mind and often give health to the body... sympathy and tact will often prove a great benefit to the sick.

Health and Happiness, page 173,
Ellen White

Spiritual Assessment Of Hospital Patients

- In today's health care environment, hospitals struggle to balance finances, quality and mission. Clinical spiritual interventions require discipline, training, dedication, talent and above all, "FAITH" that many times is the neglected factor in healing.

Percent of SCI Patients

