

SPIRITUALITY, MEANING,
AND PURPOSE:
ADDRESSING A CRITICAL
DIMENSION OF HEALING

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2020

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Land Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement of the traumatic impact
of the suppression of indigenous cultural
and religious practices in the United States

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Group agreements

- Take care of yourself
- Curiosity (not conversion)
- “Move up” (into listening more or speaking more)
- Pay attention to the tension (notice, without judgement, any discomfort in your body-mind)
- No one knows everything, together we know a lot

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My perspectives and worldviews

- trauma survivor (including spiritual harm)
- theology and ministry
- person of faith, “cultural Catholic”

Your perspectives: share in the poll questions

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Defining 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.”

(Pulchalski et al, *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 2009)

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Meaning and purpose (“what will get you out of bed”)

"Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything.”

- Pedro Arrupe, SJ (1907-1991)

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Defining spiritual distress or crisis

May occur in connection with a trauma or significant, life interrupting event. May include:

- Loss of hope
- Loss of meaning
- Loss of connection

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When and how is spirituality addressed?



[Image courtesy of DaisvFig, wikimedia.org](#)

ABRAHAM MASLOW HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow, A. Motivation and
Personality (2nd ed.)
Harper & Row, 1970.



[Image courtesy of Alexfilip96, wikimedia.org](#)

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The role of spirituality may differ depending on worldview

Examples:

- Medical worldview
- Trauma-informed (social) worldview
- Spiritual worldview

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Self-knowledge

Knowing ourselves and the worldview we bring to our interactions is important.

- Curiosity instead of converting
- Options instead of advice

Activity: self-reflection tool

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F.I.C.A. spiritual reflection tool

(from the GW Institute for Spirituality & Health)

- **F**aith and belief
- **I**mportance
- **C**ommunity
- **A**ddress in care (action)

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Practicing cultural humility related to spirituality:

- Appreciation instead of appropriation when exploring new practices
- Learn about faith communities in your area: are they welcoming of all identities, supportive of recovery, etc?
- Who can you ask when you don't know?

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Awareness about “tender spots”

- Historical and generational trauma related to spirituality and cultural practices
- Religious rejection due to identity
- Clergy abuse (spiritual, sexual)

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Possible “religion-neutral” spiritual activities

defining values

music*

devotional/meaningful reading*

service to others

seasonal decorations (e.g. winter instead of Christmas)

offering gratitude

storytelling

*find choices that do not endorse a particular religion over others

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**Questions, comments,
further discussion**

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**Thank you for your presence
here today.**

For further training, consultation, or
support resources, please contact me:

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