

Spiritual Assessment Tool

An acronym that can be used to remember what is asked in a spiritual history is:

F: Faith or Beliefs
I: Importance and influence
C: Community
A: Address

Some specific questions you can use to discuss these issues are:

F: What is your faith or belief?
Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious?
What things do you believe in that give meaning to your life?

I: Is it important in your life?
What influence does it have on how you take care of yourself?
How have your beliefs influenced your behavior during this illness?
What role do your beliefs play in regaining your health?

C: Are you part of a spiritual or religious community?
Is this of support to you and how?
Is there a person or group of people you really love or who are really important to you?

A: How would you like me, your healthcare provider, to address these issues in your healthcare?

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CME 2008

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Examples of Questions for the HOPE Approach to Spiritual Assessment

H: Sources of hope, meaning, comfort, strength, peace, love and connection

We have been discussing your support systems. I was wondering, what is there in your life that gives you internal support?
What are your sources of hope, strength, comfort and peace?
What do you hold on to during difficult times?
What sustains you and keeps you going?
For some people, their religious or spiritual beliefs act as a source of comfort and strength in dealing with life's ups and downs; is this true for you?
If the answer is "yes," go on to O and P questions.
If the answer is "no," consider asking: was it ever? If the answer is "Yes," ask: What changed?

O: Organized religion

Do you consider yourself part of an organized religion?
How important is this to you?
What aspects of your religion are helpful and not so helpful to you?
Are you part of a religious or spiritual community? Does it help you? How?

P: Personal spirituality/practices

Do you have personal spiritual beliefs that are independent of organized religion? What are they?
Do you believe in God? What kind of relationship do you have with God?
What aspects of your spirituality or spiritual practices do you find most helpful to you personally? (e.g., prayer, meditation, reading scripture, attending religious services, listening to music, hiking, communing with nature)

E: Effects on medical care and end-of-life issues

Has being sick (or your current situation) affected your ability to do the things that usually help you spiritually? (Or affected your relations with God?)
As a doctor, is there anything that I can do to help your access the resources that usually help you?
Are you worried about any conflicts between your beliefs and your medical situation/care/decisions?
Would it be helpful for you to speak to a clinical chaplain/community spiritual leader?
Are there any specific practices or restrictions I should know about in providing your medical care? (e.g., dietary restrictions, use of blood products)

If the patient is dying: How do your beliefs affect the kind of medical care you would like me to provide over the next few days/weeks/months?

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