



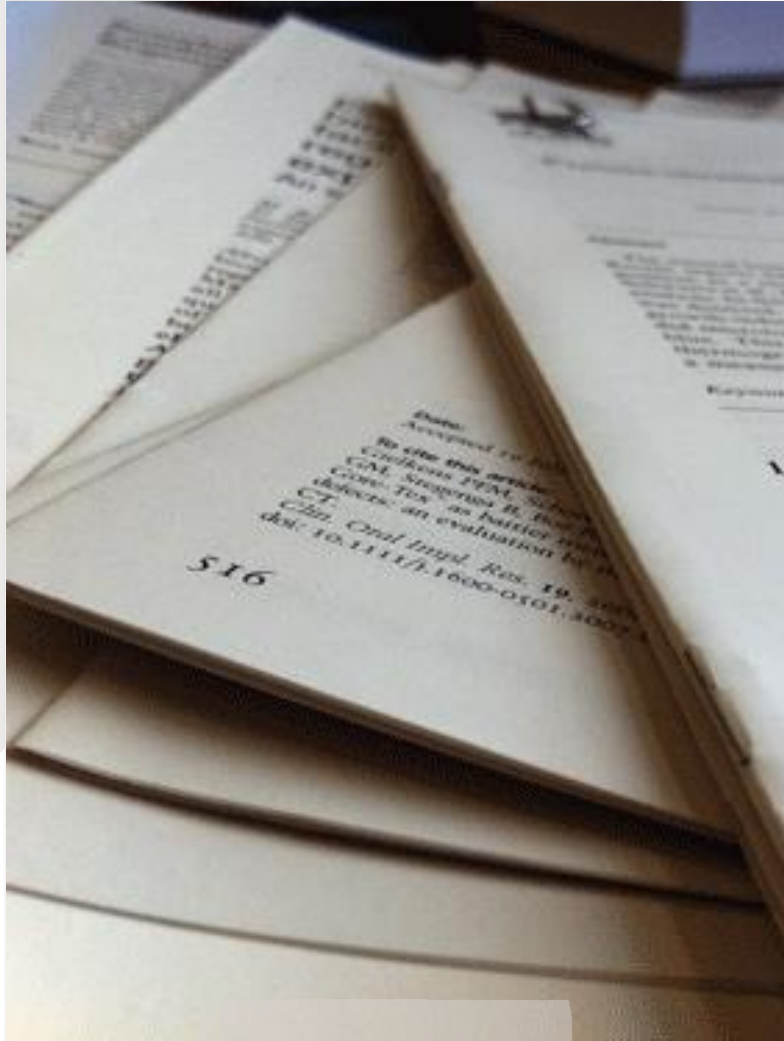
SPIRITUAL CARE IN THE HEALTHCARE FIELD

By: Summer Sirrine

ABOUT ME

- Graduating with my BSN in nursing in 10 days!
- Attended a summer mission trip/conference where I learned about spiritual care in the healthcare setting
- There I had the opportunity to shadow doctors and see how they implemented what I was learning about





INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

Goal: Create a comprehensive resource regarding various topics surrounding spiritual care (SC)

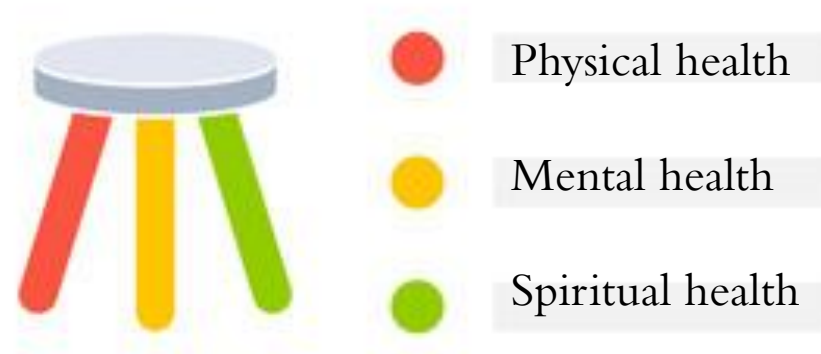
- Process consisted of examining current literature on SC
- Various studies and scholarly sources were analyzed, and results compiled
- Recommendations stated throughout thesis
- A short video was created to model what SC/spiritual assessment can look like in the healthcare setting

THE BASICS OF SC

- Healthcare providers should gain background knowledge on spiritual terms/concepts
- Everyone has spiritual needs (i.e need to be loved, finding meaning in life, source of hope/support, etc.) (NHS Inform, 2020)
- Spiritual needs may be exacerbated in times of illness
- It can be accomplished in a number of ways (assessment, referrals, etc.)

IMPORTANCE OF SC: ANALOGY + PRACTICE

- Physical/mental/spiritual health are all interconnected
- As seen in the figure, each represents a “leg of a stool”
- Medical practice can be impacted by spirituality/religion
- Specific information may not be discovered unless a spiritual assessment is performed



IMPORTANCE OF SC: JOINT COMMISSION



- The Joint Commission accredits the majority of healthcare facilities within the US
- They set national “best-practice” guidelines and standards
- Joint Commission states “spiritual needs, beliefs, values and preferences” should be assessed and evaluated” (Joint Commission, 2022)

IMPORTANCE OF SC: HOW SC AFFECTS PATIENTS

POSITIVE

- Patients in a study found that addressing spiritual needs led to, “a reduction in stress, anxiety, depression”
- It also promoted, “an increase in resilience and hope”

(Diego-Cordero et al., 2022)

NEGATIVE

- Another study found 91% of cancer patients had spiritual needs
- The patients whose needs were unaddressed resulted in: more depressive symptoms, less meaning in life, and decreased feelings of peace

(Pearce et al., 2011)

QUALIFICATIONS TO PERFORM SC



- Healthcare providers can learn how to perform SC within their own specific role
- No specific qualifications are necessary, but a provider performing SC should know how to do it “appropriately” (Elk et al., 2017)
- When the healthcare team unites, patients needs are met and the workload of SC is reduced

HOW TO PERFORM SC

- Ask further questions when a psychiatric evaluation or medical/social history is being taken (Verghese, 2008)
- Show respect and support
- Collaborate with other religious workers (i.e chaplains)
- Pray with patients
- Perform spiritual assessments and using that information for appropriate referrals/interventions



Table 2. HOPE Questions for Spiritual Assessment

Category	Sample questions
H: sources of hope	What are your sources of hope, strength, comfort, and peace? What do you hold on to during difficult times?
O: organized religion	Are you part of a religious or spiritual community? Does it help you? How?
P: personal spirituality and practices	Do you have personal spiritual beliefs? What aspects of your spirituality or spiritual practices do you find most helpful?
E: effects on medical care and end-of-life issues	Does your current situation affect your ability to do the things that usually help you spiritually? As a doctor, is there anything that I can do to help you access the resources that usually help you? Are there any specific practices or restrictions I should know about in providing your medical care? 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?

Adapted with permission from Anandarajah G, Hight E. Spirituality and medical practice: using the HOPE questions as a practical tool for spiritual assessment. Am Fam Physician. 2001;63(1):87.

Table 1. FICA Spiritual History Tool

Category	Sample questions
Faith and belief	Do you have spiritual beliefs that help you cope with stress? If the patient responds "no," consider asking: what gives your life meaning?
Importance	Have your beliefs influenced how you take care of yourself in this illness?
Community	Are you part of a spiritual or religious community? Is this of support to you, and how?
Address in care	How would you like me to address these issues in your health care?

Adapted with permission from The George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health. FICA spiritual history tool. <http://www.gwumc.edu/gwish/clinical/fica.cfm>. Accessed March 10, 2011.

HOW TO PERFORM SC

FICA & HOPE spiritual assessment tools

VIDEO: SC ASSESSMENT

Patient background: The patient is a 22-year-old, female, who visited her primary care doctor's office concerning a recent diagnosis of Hodgkin's lymphoma (cancer to the lymph nodes). The nurse is preceding the physician with a preliminary spiritual assessment using the FICA spiritual assessment tool.



COMPLICATIONS TO SC

Common barriers: lack of time, experience, other priorities, difficulties identifying patients that need SC, not feeling like it is apart of the providers role

- A study identified what patients felt about SC: spirituality is personal, SC is about connecting, and conversations should align with the patient's beliefs
- Providers feel there is another barrier to SC if patients have very different spiritual beliefs than what they hold

(Saguil & Phelps, 2012; Fitch & Bartlett, 2019)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Spiritual care competency training courses should be made available for education furthering credits/opportunities.
- Organizations must respond to national guidelines of SC to achieve best practices and holistic/whole person care
- Healthcare providers should collaborate as a team and learn to utilize the resources available
- It is essential to find one SC tool that works for an individual provider within their specific discipline

CONCLUSION

Conclusion: the importance of SC in patients' lives has been proven, and organizations/providers have a duty to implement SC according to national best practice guidelines.

QUESTIONS?



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