



# **Spiritual Assessment in Community Health Nursing**

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As you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head, or the head without the body, so neither should you attempt to cure the body without the soul for the part can never be well unless the whole is well.

- Plato

What are we  
assessing ?

# Spirituality

- fundamental essence which energizes and guides action and thought: innate, universal
- meaning and purpose
- hope
- relatedness / connectedness
- beliefs / belief systems
- expressions of spirituality

# Religion

- system of belief practices
- organized
- institutionalized
- often transcendence present

# Psychological Dimension

- issues of human relationships on an immediate level
- emotions, intellect, will, moral sense

# Culture

- spirituality is culturally shaped
- spiritual or religious belief system arises from ethnic / cultural heritage
- religious groups constitute a culture
- cultural norms dictate spiritual beliefs / practices



# Assumptions

- people are spiritual beings: biologically, psychologically and spiritual integrated
- the spiritual dimension is worthy of independent consideration
- the spiritual / religious dimension is one variable promoting life satisfaction
- nurses need to be aware of their own spiritual beliefs / values before they can assist people spirituality

# Assumptions

- nurses have an ethical responsibility to attend to and respect peoples' spiritual beliefs
- illness / emotional turmoil often disrupts the harmony of the bio-psychosocial-spiritual integration
- responding to spiritual concerns does not require the nurse to share the client's spiritual positioning, nor does it require expertise in matters of spirituality
- spiritual care is often a team effort

# What is Spiritual Assessment ?

- gathering / interpreting data about the spiritual dimension: needs and resources
- involves content and process
- dynamic
- an art

# How do we do a Spiritual Assessment ?

- choose a model / guide / questionnaire
- “gate keeper” question
- follow principles

# Principles of Spiritual Assessment

- relationship is central
- self-awareness, self-knowledge, personal philosophy need to be present
- own philosophy / worldview is never forced on the client
- “being with” – presence the norm
- need to provide conducive environment

# Principles of Spiritual Assessment

- sensitivity is important
- spiritual concerns are often inferences, not observations
- critical life event often antecedent to spiritual concern
- active listening is key
- look for deeper meaning beyond words

# Principles of Spiritual Assessment

- be aware of language
- be comfortable with catharsis
- adjust for factors such as developmental period
- focus on meaning
- revisit periodically
- be aware of timing

# Principles of Spiritual Assessment

- see client as partner
- attitude of curiosity facilitative
- view assessment as intervention
- documentation important
- develop facilitative personal qualities



# Principles of Spiritual Assessment

- know basic tenets of major world religions
- use own spiritual / religious practices, but with sensitivity
- articulate purpose of assessment
- use good communication / counselling skills

# Non-verbal Indicators

- affect
- behaviours
- communication
- environment

# Spiritual Needs

- need for love and relatedness
- need for meaning and purpose
- need for forgiveness
- need for hope
- need for faith and belief

# Family Assessment

- family can exhibit spiritual needs
- spirituality may be a family coping mechanism



# Title

- Points / bullets