

FAITH Spiritual Assessment

F: Faith/Spiritual Beliefs

- a. Do you have any particular faith, religion or spiritual beliefs?
- b. What gives your life meaning?
- c. What helps you cope in times of stress or illness?

A: Application

- a. In what ways do you apply your faith in your daily life?
- b. Do you belong to a particular church or community?
- c. Is prayer or meditation important to you?

I: Influence/Importance of faith in life, in this illness, and on health care decisions

- a. How do your faith and spiritual beliefs influence your life? Are they important to you?
- b. How do your faith and spiritual beliefs influence you in this illness? Have they altered your attitude or behavior?
- c. Has this illness influenced your faith?
- d. Do your beliefs influence or affect your health care decisions that would be helpful for me to know about?

T: Talk/Terminal Events Planning

- a. Do have anyone you can trust to talk to about spiritual or religious issues?
- b. Do have any specific requests if you were to become terminally ill (e.g., terminal care options, living will, EOL requests).

H: Help

- a. Is there any way I or another member of the health care team can help you?
- b. Do you require assistance or help with prayer?
- c. Would you like to speak to a chaplain?
- d. Would you like to discuss spiritual issues or your beliefs with your doctor?

Neely, D., & Minford, E. (2009). FAITH: Spiritual history-taking made easy. *The Clinical Teacher*, 6, 181-185.

Box 1. Assessing the Spiritual Issues Raised by Serious Illness, Especially at the End of Life

First, establish an empathic connection with the patient (or the patient's family). Often, nothing more will be required to engage the patient in significant spiritual sharing. Only then, consider moving to more specific questions.

Opening

"It must be very hard for you to find yourself (your loved one) so sick. How are you holding up?"

Questions of Meaning

Patient/family questions

- "What is the meaning of my illness?"
- "What is the meaning of my suffering?"
- "What is the meaning of my death?"
- "Will any meaning persist beyond my death?"

Clinician questions

- "Have you thought about what all this means?"
- "Would there be anything for which you might hope even if you (your loved one) are not cured?"
- "Do you attach any spiritual significance to the word 'hope'?"

Questions of Value

Patient/family questions

- "How does my value relate to my appearance?"
- "... my productivity?"
- "... my independence?"
- "Is there anything about me that is valuable when these are threatened?"
- "Is there anything valuable about me that will persist beyond death?"

Clinician questions

- "Are you able to hold onto a sense of your own dignity and purpose?"
- "Do you feel that people in the hospital/your family/your friends/your congregation really care about you (your loved one) as a person?"
- "Are there any spiritual or religious resources upon which you can draw to help see you through this?"

Questions of Relationship

Patient/family questions

- "Am I estranged from any family or friends?"
- "Who have I wronged? Who has wronged me?"
- "Am I loved? By whom?"
- "Does love endure beyond the grave?"

Clinician questions

- "How are things with your family and friends?"
- "Is there anyone with whom you need to 'make up'?"
- "Is there anyone to whom you need to say 'I love you' or 'I'm sorry'?"
- "If you're a religious person, how are things between you and God?"

Closing Comments

"I can't do everything—that's why we work as a team. I think we've covered some very important ground here, but there's so much more to talk about. If it's okay with you I'm going to send Rev S to see you later today. Also, I'd like to tell her a little about what you've just shared with me, so she can be better prepared. Would that be okay?"

Based on Sulmasy.^{19(pp97-212)}

Sulmasy, 2006

Table 2. HOPE Questions for Spiritual Assessment

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sample questions</i>
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.