

Spiritual bodies

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Care

Attitudes towards 'spiritual'

- Ambivalent
- Hostile
- Spiritual matters are private & confidential
- Essential part of holistic care
- Comfortable, knowledgeable
- *Very* enthusiastic
- Need more education/skill development

Spirituality definitions

- The web of relationships that gives coherence to our lives' (Rumbold, 2003)
- 'Spirit' (from *spiritus*) is the fundamental breath of life which animates & sustains life (Swinton, 2001, p.14)
- The essence of life: spirit and body *together* (Hudson, R, 2009, p.37).
- May have different meanings in a specific *secular context* (la Cour et al, 2012)

Spiritual or religious?

Religion tends to focus on beliefs, ethics, rituals, traditions: sharing the values, liturgies & lifestyle of a faith community.

Spirituality is intangible & subjective; usually given in a one-to-one relationship (Wynne, 2013).

Spiritual care is not necessarily religious. Religious care, at its best, should always be spiritual (NHS HDL, 2002, 76).

Body/soul (spirit) unity

- We are not soul-less bodies: we are not body-less souls
- We **are** *embodied souls* and *ensouled bodies*
- Descartes (1586-1650) separated the two: Christianity unites them (Hudson, R, 2006)

Spiritual until death

Spirituality: a lifelong developmental task

'The need for spiritual care has an impressive historical legacy . . . and it can take us close to what it means to be human even in the face of death' (Cobb, 2001, p. 70)

Spiritual or psychological?

'Mr B is bitter, angry, won't talk to anyone, won't even ask for pain medication when he's hurting.

He looks depressed, or is it that he realises he is dying?

Should we call the chaplain?

Or the psychiatrist?'

Or?????

Spiritual or sentimental?

- Mrs A, a nursing home resident, was 102
- 'I think I'm near the end, dear', she confided to her trusted nurse

What response would you make?

Body/spirit response

Okay, you're telling me you think you don't have much more time?

What would you like to do in the time you have left?

With the help of volunteers Mrs A was taken on a short trip to (a) the Botanic Gardens and (b) StPatrick's Cathedral.

'Now, I can die content', she beamed.

Spiritual competency

- ‘ . . . the art of skilled spiritual companionship, entering into the lives of the suffering and dying’* (Cooper et al., 2010, p.871).
- *‘I look for someone to look as if they are trying to understand me’* (Saunders, C. 1965).
 - **More than diagnosis** (Wiffen, 2003)

Spirituality & suffering

'Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved. The world is full of suffering; it is also full of people overcoming it' <http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/helen-keller>.

Tuning in to spiritual bodies

- ‘What does getting old mean to you?’
- ‘What are your wishes, concerns, dreams, hopes?’
- ‘If you were approaching death, what would be important to you?’
- 5 bedside skills for spiritual care: **hearing, sight, speech, touch, presence** (Sinclair, S et al, 2012).

Culturally nuanced needs

- ‘The Selwyn Foundation's Christian heritage is reflected in our respect and compassion for elderly residents.’
- ‘Culturally informed practices bring quality of life to the dying and dignity to death’ including equitable access to palliative health care services and psychosocial **resources** (Moeke-Maxwell, et al, 2014)

Spiritual bodies at worship

- When our memory to recall details fades our bodily memory remains intact.
- Our bodily memory *is who we are*.
- This comes to expression specifically in Christian worship when a person profoundly affected by dementia recalls and responds with **bodily recognition**, to receiving the bread and wine of Holy Communion (Swinton, 2014).

Bodily barriers

- In spite of its emergence as a discrete discipline in 1944 spirituality is a subject that nurses say they've had little education in caring for their patients' 'spirit' (Broadhurst & Harrington, 2015)
- The same is true for social workers (Oxhandler et al, 2015) and for doctors (Best et al, 2015).
- Chaplains also need more research into the meaning of spirituality (Thomas, 2015).

Organisational support

- Richard Egan's research indicated a lack of comprehensive organisational support for spiritual care in New Zealand hospices.
- This research suggests that spiritual assessment procedures need to be part of all new patient's assessments, and reviewed when circumstances change (Egan et al, 2013).

Who misses out?

- Egan et al (2013) noted that those most at risk were those who were socially and geographically isolated, particularly due to ethnicity.
- Older people *welcome* 'spiritual discussions' but are seldom offered them (Hudson, R, In Hudson, P & Payne, S, eds, 2009; Williams *et al*, 2011).

Spiritual assessment

- FICA =
- F- Do you belong to a faith tradition?
- I How important is faith to you?
- C- Do you belong to a faith community?
- A – How does your faith affect how you would like me to care for you?

Listening & understanding: not intruding

(Orr, 2015)

Holistic care?

- ‘Many healthcare professionals would feel hard-pressed to describe their assessment and treatment of spiritual problems as ‘impeccable’ (Nolan et al, 2011)
- This has profound implications for palliative and end-of-life care which claims to be holistic (Hudson, 2014).

Spiritual = human

- The spiritual dimension cannot be ignored, for it is what makes us human (Victor Frankl, 2000).
- ‘The beyond is not what is infinitely remote, but what is nearest at hand’ (Bonhoeffer, D, cited in Kuhl, D. 2002, p.249)

Seneca from ancient Rome

Here I am – this is me in my nakedness, with my wounds, my secret grief, my despair, my betrayal, my pain which I can't express, my terror, my abandonment. Oh, listen to me for a day, an hour, a moment, lest I expire in my terrible wilderness, my lonely silence. Oh God, is there no one to listen? (cited in Saunders, 2006), p.219).

Spiritual bodies: the language of love

'I am dependent for my humanity on yours. And that is a risky bet . . . For if I am dependent upon your humanity for mine, on whom are you dependent for yours? . . . And so I wait, and so do you, and the word of love is not spoken, to which our humanity would be the response' (Jenson, 1995, pp.29-30).

Spiritual bodies: the human mystery

- To care for the older person as an 'ensouled body' and 'embodied soul' is to acknowledge the mystery of our humanity.
- Defined pathways and measurable outcomes are consolidated by relationships of love and trust.

Spiritual bodies: total care

By the physical touch of human hands each older person hears the truly transforming spiritual words:

You are safe in our care

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