

Spirituality & Spiritual Care in Dunedin's Residential Aged Care Sector: interviews with staff



Mei-Ling Blank – Sarah Wood – Richard Egan
Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago

Outline

- Dunedin
- What we did
- What we found
 - Ways of understanding spirituality
 - Ways of understanding & delivering spiritual care
 - Key barriers
- Where to from here?



2013

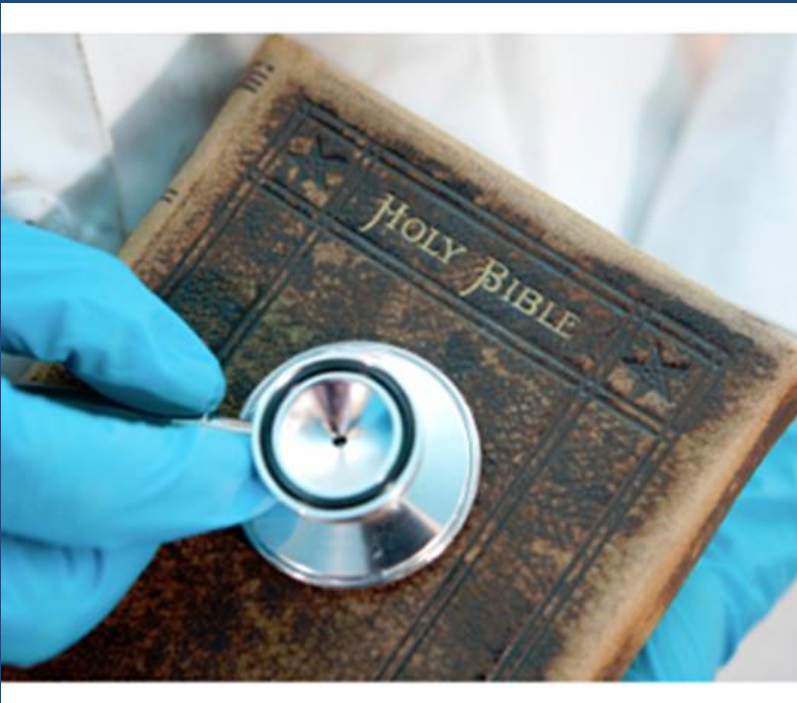


2026?

What we did

Structured interviews with paid staff

- Understanding of spirituality & spiritual care
- Ways of offering spiritual care
- Barriers & improvements to delivering spiritual care



Participants' characteristics

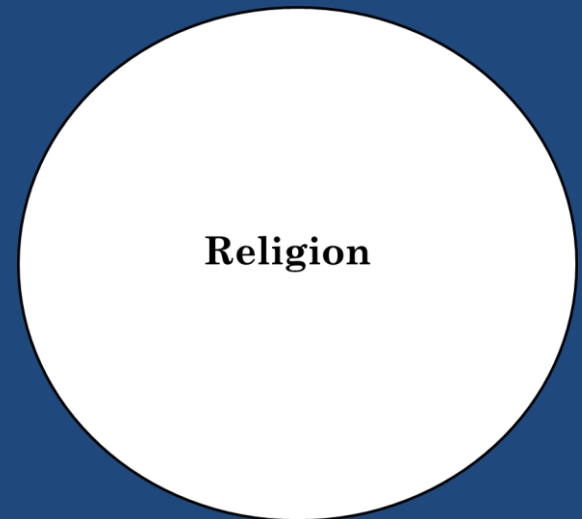
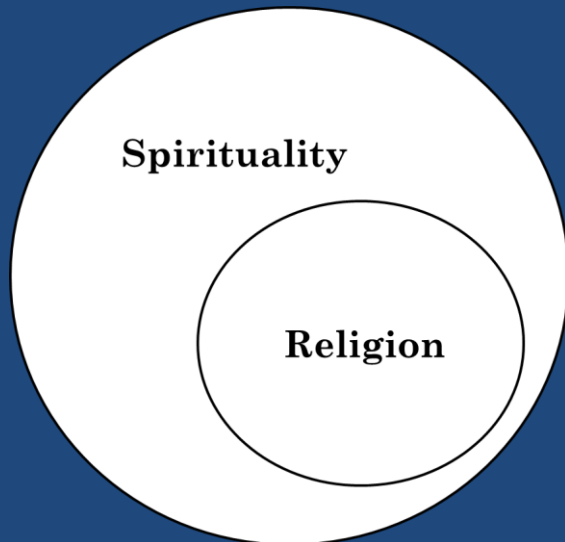
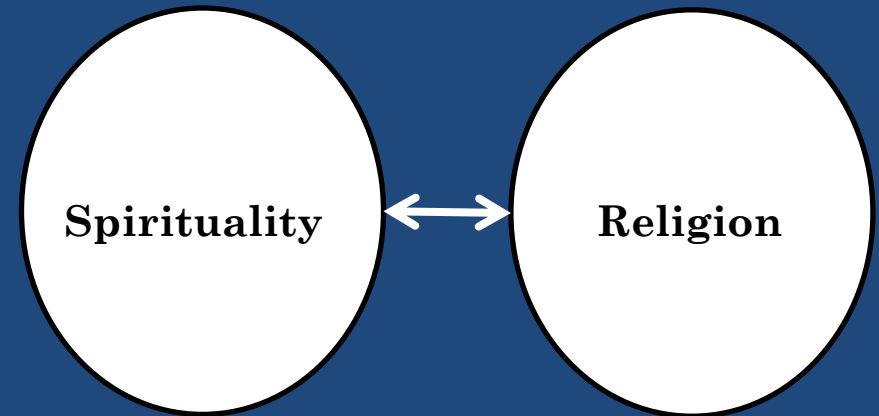
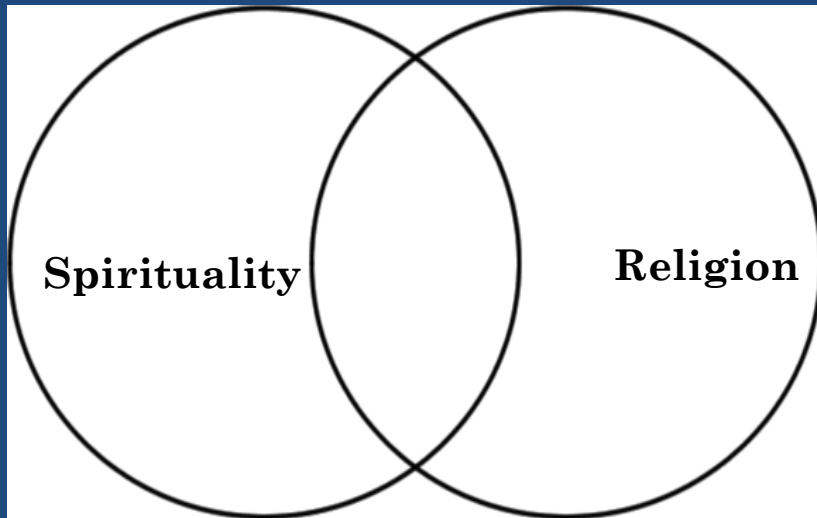


Individuality & Wholeness

“What makes up a person really. It’s about the person – their likes, dislikes, their beliefs, their values. Everything about the person is part of their spirituality.”



Different from Religion



Different from Religion

“My automatic and in the past response would be religion, but I know it’s more than that. I think it’s a sense of self and being for that person, things that contribute to their well-being.”



Understanding of Spiritual Care



**Spiritual
Care**

**Religious
Care**

“How” vs “Doing”

“Spiritual care is your empathy and how you treat someone... You just do what you do, it’s how you do...”



Spiritual care = (Holistic) care

“Spiritual care would probably be a wide variety such as, well for me, it consists of people’s needs are being answered, being provided.”



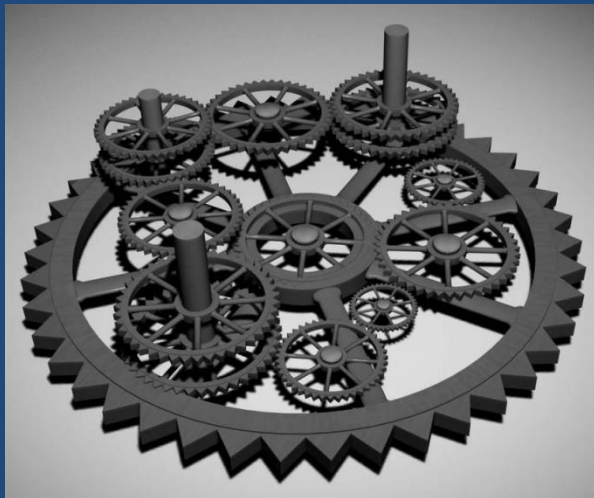
Operationalising Spiritual Care

Organisational level:

- Policy
- Needs assessment
- In-service training
- Chaplains

Personal level:

- Befriending
- Counselling
- End-of-life care
- Facilitating relationships
- Facilitating religious rituals



Personal Level Befriending

“...it’s never an in-depth – it’s just a requirement at the time, of someone caring to listen, or someone caring to do what they want to do...”



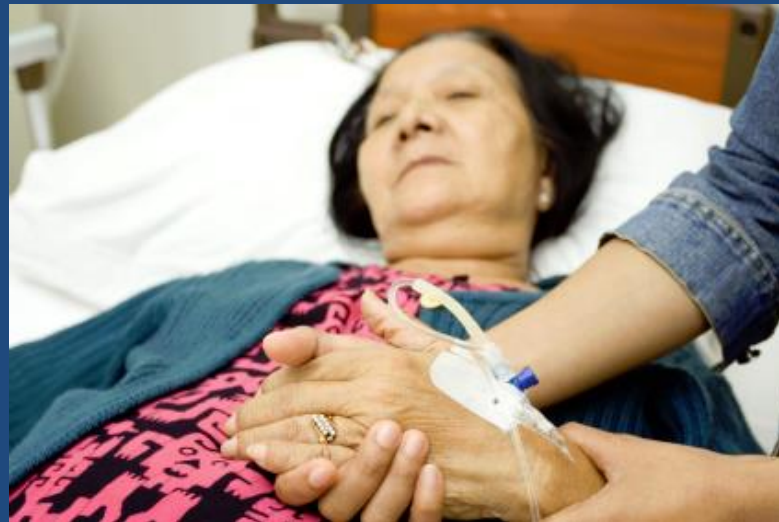
Personal Level Counselling

“...often it can be people don't know what is bothering them, but once you start talking and once you start digging a little deeper...something will come up that they hadn't actually realised themselves.”



Personal Level End of life

“A lot of the spiritual care that you are giving is really that end of life comfort...”



Barriers

Staff:

- Lack of personal awareness
- Fear of imposing unwanted care



Residents:

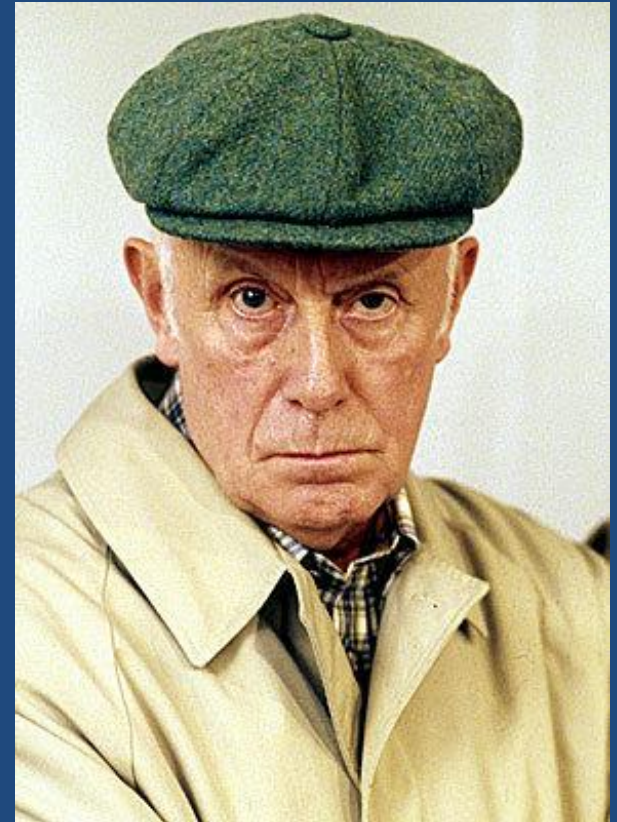
- Spirituality=Religion
- Unresolved issues
- Health challenges

Structural:

- Staffing/time
 - Relationship building
 - Task orientation
- Lack of respect

Relationship Building

“If you haven’t built up a relationship it is very difficult....I would expect more of the anti-sort of reaction if you haven’t got a relationship, because they could feel like you are interfering...”



Task orientation

“We were on the task but not the person...”



“It’s a kind of a Martha-type organisation rather than a Mary kind of organisation – it’s a doing.”

Lack of Respect

“If you’ve got carers going in there who are stressed, trying to make things meet in their own home, and they’re going to work...there is a lot of disheartedness out there...how the heck are they supposed to do a good job when they are feeling low themselves?”



So?





The participating aged care facilities and staff
for giving us their time and insights

The Selwyn Centre for Ageing and Spirituality
for the opportunity to undertake this project