

Healing the healer : Spiritual self care

Dr Anna Holmes

PhD Candidate

Department of Bioethics,
University of Otago

Medical Officer

Otago Community Hospice
Dunedin

30 August 2009

Healing the healer : spiritual self care

Physicians' personal actions, and the way that our actions help our patients make better choices, are a good place to start healing ourselves, our patients and our planet.

Professor Erica Frank
Vancouver

Health Matters : Finding the Balance
BMA London, 2008



Whole person care

What may be required is an ongoing assessment of evidence: comparison with the individual; attention to narrative; care and presence.

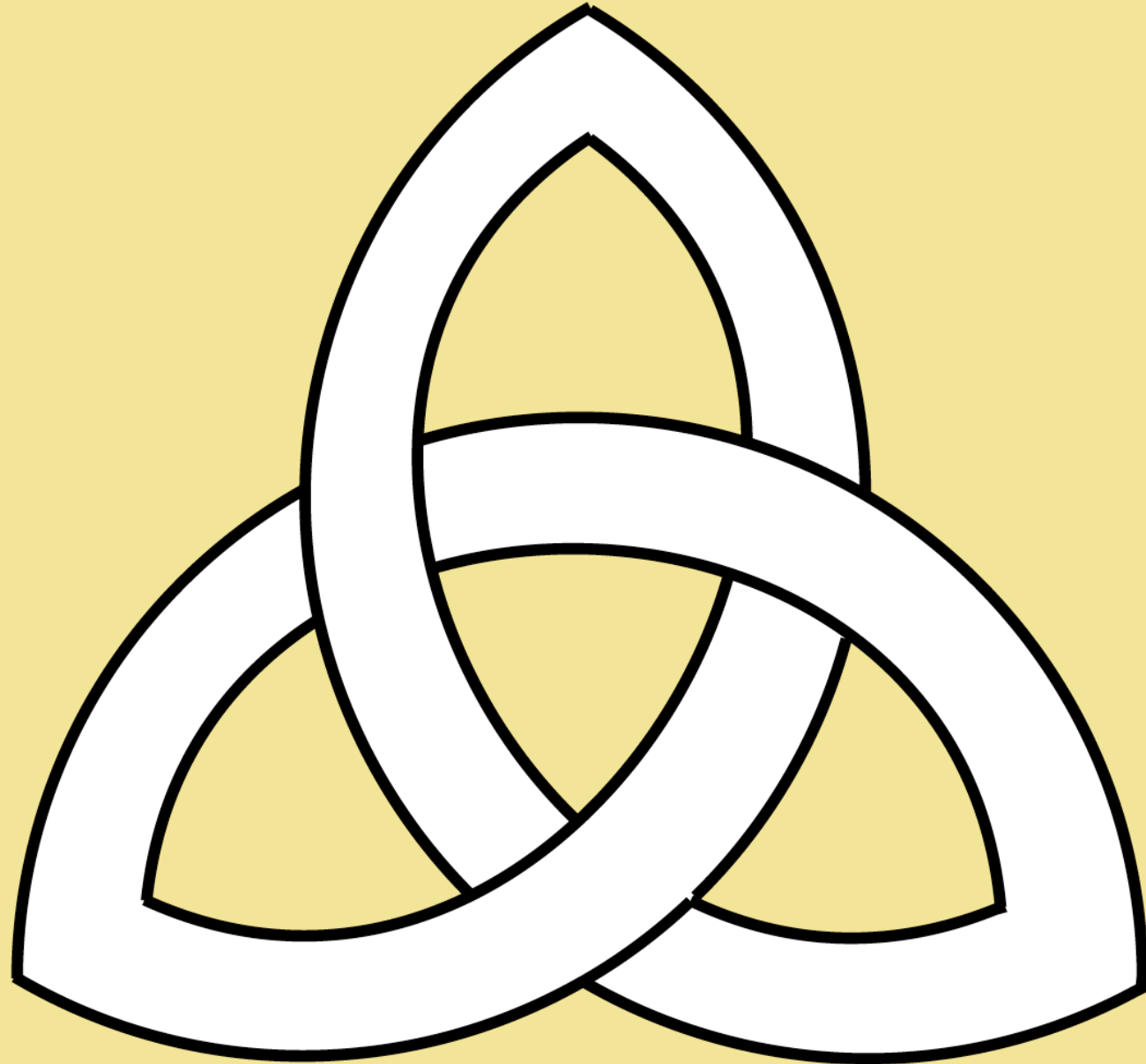
Kerridge 2009

What does spirituality mean to you?

Three factors characterize human existence as such... spirituality... freedom, ...responsibility. The spirituality of man is no epiphenomenon. It cannot be derived from and causally explained by something not spiritual; it is irreducible and indeducible...

Frankl 1954

natural world



Self

Other



Spiritual connections 1

How have you experienced spirituality and connection with patients or family?

Spiritual connections 2

How have you experienced spirituality and connection with yourself?

Spiritual connections 3

How have you experienced spiritual connections with the natural world?

Spiritual connections 4

How have you experienced spiritual connections with the transcendent?

Understanding of spirituality

- **Connection**
- Mystery
- Uniqueness
- Unknowable – beyond rational and religious
- Centre of self
- Meaning and purpose
- Growth and transitions
- Seeking right path
- Religious beliefs

Spiritual self care

What do you do to take care of your patient's spiritual self and you own?

Spiritual self care

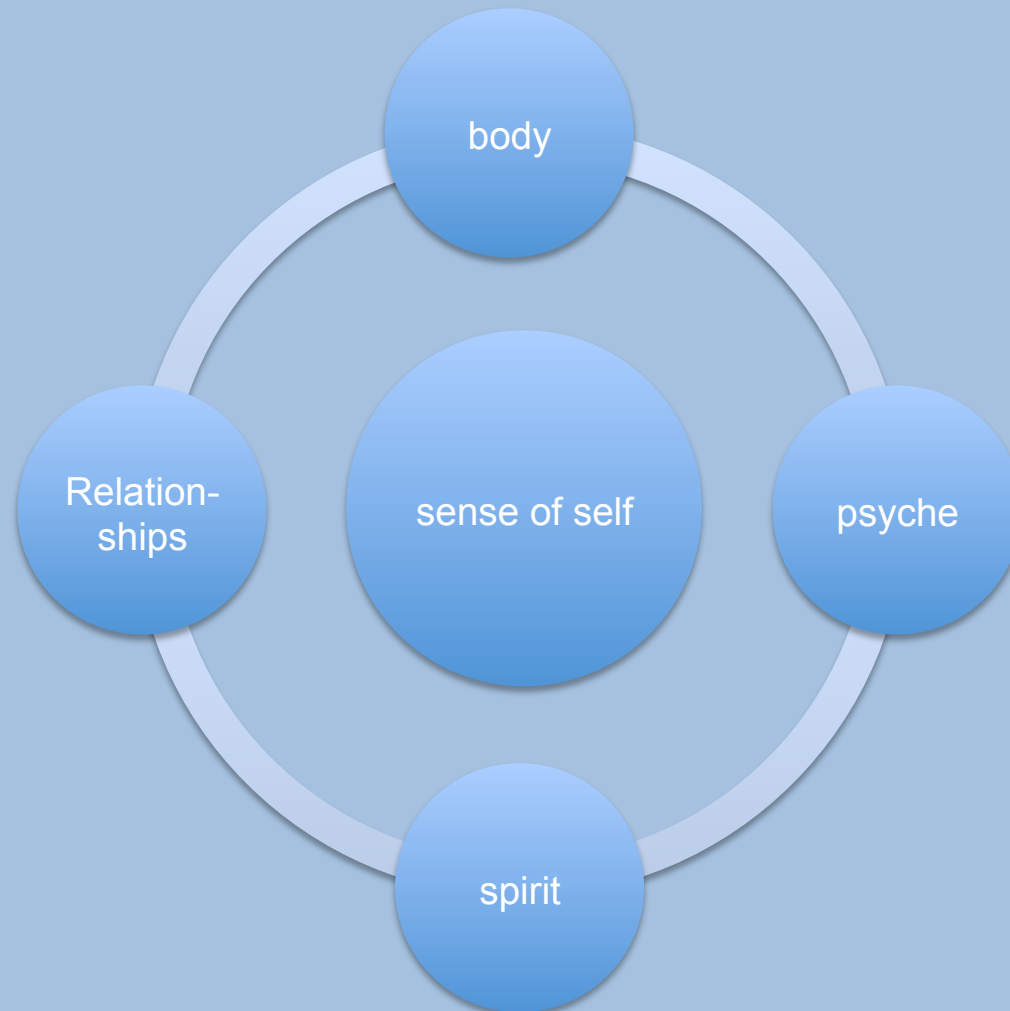
- Self awareness
- Taking time to be in solitude
- Connecting with natural world
- Meditation
- Mindfulness/grounding
- Creative activity – writing, sewing, music, gardening, woodwork, singing, drama, photography, painting, cooking, craft work...
- Spiritual/Religious activities
- Rituals
- Visiting 'healing' places

Care of the Psyche

- Choosing appropriate work load
- Leaving work at work - marking boundaries
- Ongoing learning
- Reading
- Thankfulness
- Forgiveness
- Relaxation exercises
- Clinical supervision
- Mentoring
- Travelling
- Sharing laughter – films/theatre/friends

Spiritual self care

Are you in balance?



Healthy spirituality

Is unique, embodied, a search, a journey.

It has stops and starts and may be lonely and painful as well as enriching and fulfilling.

It continues from first cry to last breath – both of which take us by surprise.