

Spiritual Care in Long Term Care

Aubrey Hemminger,
Coordinator of Spiritual Care
Deer Lodge Centre

Introduction



Centering ourselves

Being Still

Hope Beauty Peace Love

Strength of others

Spirituality: A way of life

A person's relationship with self, with others, with the world around, and with a Higher Power, which nurtures and celebrates wholeness.

Work of meaning making:

What gives meaning?

What brings life together?

What has been precious/sacred?

Care of the Whole Person

- More than the sum total of physiological systems
- Hope in the face of loss and illness
- Sources of courage and strength
- Suffering
- End of life

Spirituality

A Person is not a problem to be solved

But a mystery in which to dwell.

Spiritual Care

Basic Spiritual Needs:

To both give and receive unconditional
love.

and....

Long Term Care

- A new way of being
- Acute care: hope for a cure, perhaps in a day or a year, hope for regaining strength
- Long Term Care:
 - ongoing, deterioration, death
 - a different kind of hope

Spiritual Issues in LTC

Why me?

Multiple losses ...

Grief

Sorrow

And...

Spiritual Development Tasks for Aging and Long Term Care

- Come to terms with the losses
 - Multiple losses, with frailty and chronic illness
 - Develop a spirituality that accepts loss as part of the pattern of life. What sustains you?
 - Move into a new way of being

Spiritual Development Tasks

- Develop a new sense of being needed and wanted. From abandonment to a different sense of community and family
- Look back at life. What has made my life worthwhile? What did it all mean?
- Make peace with death. Work through fear, anxiety, acceptance. Be in touch with religious faith.

Spiritual Development Tasks

- Live the present meaningfully.
 - In a reassurance that life still has meaning and value. (“Do I matter?”)
 - Who am I? Old roles stripped away. Answers to identity questions lie within ourselves, known by who we are, not by what we do.
 - Life reduced to simpler terms. Appreciate the things we used to take for granted. “To open my eyes to a new day.”

Being Present

- Listen so as to acknowledge the value and importance of the other person
- Reach below the surface to build a stronger contact
- Give people our complete attention
- Be available, with our own fears and needs not in the way
- Create a safe place. Offer hospitality.

Healing

- To experience love
- To reconcile with family and friends
- To be understood as valuable
- To develop a sense of meaning in the face of life/death

Spiritual Care

- Thank you
- Questions?