

SPIRITUALITY & MENTAL HEALTH

A mental health crisis is understood by many as a spiritual crisis. The task is to discern the psychospiritual experience from the psychopathological. The interplay of religion/spirituality and psychopathology is complex.

Vieten & Scammell, 2015

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- intrinsic self-worth
- inner peace
- living from deepest values
- a sense of flourishing



Spiritual Health Association,
2021

SHARED QUALITIES

- sense of purpose
- mindfulness, presence
- connection to self, others
- gratitude and appreciation
- empathy

MENTAL HEALTH

- emotional resilience
- healthy relationships
- work/life balance
- clarity and focus

World Health Organisation,
2023



GROWTH

When spiritual needs are met

Spiritual needs can be fulfilled by:

- exploring one's inner world
- having beliefs and values that offer meaning and hope
- connecting with self, others, nature and something bigger
- expressing love, compassion and forgiveness
- experiencing transcendence
- exploring ritual, symbol, metaphor

Holm, 2023

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Spiritual beliefs and practices have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing because they help us:

- cope with adversity
- feel positive, optimistic and happy
- have a sense of hope, meaning and purpose
- increase self esteem
- have a sense of control
- increase social connection and support

Koenig, 2012

When spiritual needs are not met

STRUGGLE

SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

Psychospiritual

A natural part of life that arises in times of challenge. Also referred to as existential crisis.

Pargament & Exline,
2022

SHARED SYMPTOMS

- confused thinking, inability to focus
- grief, depression, anxiety
- mood changes, sleep difficulties
- shame, guilt, excessive worry
- anger towards God, others, self
- loss of hope, identity, meaning
- loneliness, isolation, terror

MENTAL ILLNESS

Psychopathological

A general term for a group of illnesses that affect the mind or brain.

Mental Health Australia,
2023



Spiritual
Health
Association

Spiritually inclusive healthcare for all
www.spiritualhealth.org.au

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SPIRITUAL & MENTAL HEALTH CARE

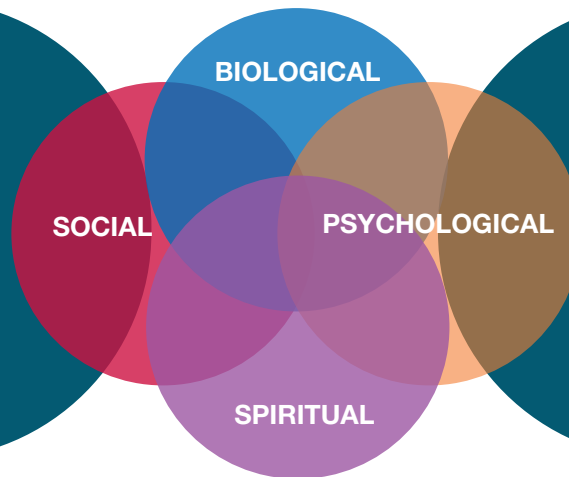
Spirituality is both a strength and a resource that can be harnessed to support a person to move through mental health challenges. Raffy et al, 2016

HOLISTIC CARE INCLUDES THE SPIRITUAL DOMAIN

World Health Organization defines the four dimensions of wellbeing as:

- physical
- social
- mental
- spiritual.**

WHO Geneva Charter, 2021



THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL-SPIRITUAL MODEL

The biological, the psychological, the social, and the **spiritual** are distinct dimensions of the person, and no one aspect can be disaggregated from the whole.

Sulmasy, 2002



MENTAL ILLNESS OR SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE?

Compassionate care is the responsibility of all healthcare workers.

Balboni et al, 2014

The multi-disciplinary care team can ask these questions:

Exploring a person's spirituality:

- What gives your life meaning?
- What is important to your sense of self and what you value?
- What sources of support do you turn to?
- Are there any spiritual practices, rituals, communities or places you find helpful?

MISTIC Toolkit, 2021

Assessing spirituality in mental health care:

- What ways does spirituality contribute to the problem?
- What ways could it be part of the solution?

Pearce & Pargament, 2018



FURTHER SUPPORT?

REFER TO A SPECIALIST SPIRITUAL CARE PRACTITIONER

Professional spiritual care can help discern between spiritual struggle and mental illness and the complex interplay between the two.

Spiritual care is the provision of



assessment



counselling



support



ritual

in matters of a person's beliefs, traditions, values and practices enabling the person to access their own spiritual resources. Spiritual Health Association, 2020

Explore the availability of spiritual care within your service to ensure holistic health care provision.



Spiritual
Health
Association

Leading the integration of safe and high-quality spiritual care in healthcare
www.spiritualhealth.org.au

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