



RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

What is Religion?

Religion refers to a personal set, or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Usually religion is thought to be an organized system of faith that uses ceremonies and rules to guide followers who worship a God or a group of gods. The five largest religions in the world include Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

What is Spirituality?

Spirituality can be a broad concept that usually implies a connection to something bigger than oneself. The term can be used to describe any activity that helps one find meaning and purpose. It may also refer to personal growth, blissful experience, and connectedness. Spirituality can be different for each and every person. Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care understands spirituality as that which brings meaning to a person's life.

What is Spiritual Distress?

Spiritual distress can occur with a disruption in one's beliefs, values or sense of meaning or hope. It can affect a person's entire being, including their physical body and their relationships. Individuals who do not follow a formal spiritual tradition still may experience significant spiritual distress especially as they experience crisis and loss.

Signs and Symptoms of Spiritual Distress:

- Questioning the meaning of life and/or death
- Questioning the meaning of suffering
- A sense of emptiness or loss of direction
- Hopelessness or deep despair
- Fear of going to sleep or other fears
- Questioning your own belief system
- Anger at God/higher power
- Feeling abandoned by God/higher power
- Pain and other physical symptoms that cannot be helped with medications or other medical treatment

Tell Your Care Team About:

- Any indications of the thoughts, feelings or behaviors listed above
- Known history of spiritual distress
- Indications of not caring about oneself and life in general
- Suddenly rejecting or neglecting previous beliefs or spiritual practices



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How Caregivers Can Help:

- Asking questions means you care – as does your Care Team. Do not think that you are bothering the Care Team with questions.
- Talk to someone you can trust. It could be someone you have long trusted, or a neutral Care Team member, with whom you can share thoughts and feelings about spirituality or religion.
- Don't dismiss too quickly, reassure, or negatively judge someone who mentions painful or frightening spiritual topics. Many people need to work through spiritual wounds, fears or "unfinished business" in order to come to peace before they die. Listen without judgment and get help from a spiritual leader or professional to support the person who is struggling. Your Care Team includes a spiritual care expert, a chaplain, who is there to help people explore and resolve spiritual and/or religious questions.

Need more information or help? Call 633-3400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get live help. Thank you for letting us help care for you and your loved ones.