

SOUTH WEST STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

SOME DEFINITIONS

Spirituality - Many:

- Spirituality is rooted in an awareness which is part of the biological make up of the human species.
- Spirituality is present in all individuals and it may manifest as inner peace and strength derived from a perceived relationship with a transcendent God/ an ultimate reality, or whatever an individual values as supreme.
- The spiritual dimension evokes feelings which demonstrate the existence of love, faith, hope, trust, awe, inspirations; therein providing meaning and a reason for existence.
- It comes into focus particularly when an individual faces emotional stress, physical illness or death.

(Narayanasamy 1999)

Religious or Spiritual?

- ‘Spiritual’ is often confused with ‘religious’. Religious, however, means pertaining to a religion, ie a framework of theistic beliefs and rituals which give expression to spiritual concerns. While everyone has a spiritual dimension, in Britain today only a minority practise a formal religion. Hence, although people commonly say, ‘I am not religious’, they do not say ‘I am not spiritual.’

(Working Party on the Impact of Hospice Experience 1991:125-2 in Cobb 2001)

Spiritual Care:

- ‘spiritual care is responding to the uniqueness of the individual: accepting their range of doubts, beliefs and values just as they are. It means responding to the spoken or unspoken statements from the very core of that person as valid expressions of where they are and who they are. It is to be a facilitator in their search for identity on the journey of life and in the particular situation in which they find themselves. IT is to respond without being prescriptive, judgemental or dogmatic and without preconditions, acknowledging that each will be at a different stage on that personal spiritual journey.

(Stoter 1995 in Cobb 2001)

Pastoral Care:

- ...is the healing, sustaining, guiding, personal/ societal formation and reconciling of persons and their relationships to family and community by representative Christian (or other faith) persons (ordained and lay), and by their faith communities, who ground their care in the theological perspective of the faith tradition and who personally remain faithful to that faith through spiritual authenticity.

(Goodliff 1998:10 in Cobb 2001)

References

- Aru Narayanasamy (2001), *Spiritual Care – A practical guide for nurses and health care practitioners* 2nd Ed ; Quay Books.
Mark Cobb (2001), *The Dying Soul – spiritual care at the end of life*; Open University Press.