



# *The Importance and Impact of Utilizing Spirituality in Recovery*

*Faith, Hope and Love in Treatment of Mental Ill Health and Trauma*

Anne Tallegrand-Cajuste CPS, CPRP

# What Is Spirituality?

## *Spirituality*

- ▶ Individual's sense of purpose and meaning in life, beyond material values
- ▶ The personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, meaning, and our relationship with the sacred or transcendent



# What Is Spirituality? (Cont'd)

## Religion and Spirituality Are Distinct Concepts

- ▶ **Spirituality** may or may not lead to participation in organized religion.
- ▶ **Religion**—a system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols designed to facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent
- ▶ Many individuals consider spirituality to be important in their lives, but not necessarily in the form of religion.
- ▶ **Perennial philosophy**—the universal ideas that underlie all spiritual experience

# Characteristics of Distinguishing Spirituality and Religion

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## Characteristics Distinguishing Religion and Spirituality

Religion	Spirituality
Community focused	Individualistic
Observable, measurable, objective	Less measurable, more subjective
Formal, orthodox, organized	Less formal, less orthodox, less systematic
Behavior oriented, outward practices	Emotionally oriented, inwardly directed
Authoritarian in terms of behaviors	Not authoritarian, little accountability
Doctrine separating good from evil	Unifying, not doctrine oriented

**Source:** National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), "Prayer and Spirituality in Health: Ancient Practices, Modern Science," *CAM at the NIH* 12, no. 1 (2005): 1–4.



# What Are the Benefits of Focusing on Your Spiritual Health?

## ▶ **Spiritual Health Contributes to Physical Health**

- ▶ Can improve immune function, cardiovascular function, and/or other physiological changes.
- ▶ Americans who attend religious services regularly or practice spirituality live many years longer, on average, than those who do not.
- ▶ People who are more spiritually healthy exhibit greater self-control.
- ▶ Those who are spiritually healthy may also be more disciplined about getting adequate exercise and sleep.

# What Are the Benefits of Focusing on Your Spiritual Health?

## **Spiritual or Religious Well-Being Improves Quality of Life**

- ▶ By decreasing anxiety, depression, anger, discomfort, and feelings of isolation
- ▶ By decreasing alcohol and drug use
- ▶ By decreasing blood pressure and the risk of heart disease
- ▶ By increasing the ability to cope with the effects of illness and with medical treatments
- ▶ By increasing feelings of hope, optimism, freedom from regret, satisfaction with life, and inner peace



What are some benefits of focusing on your spiritual health?

### **Spiritual Health Contributes to Psychosocial Health**

- ▶ Current research suggests spiritual health reduces levels of anxiety and depression.
- ▶ Yoga, deep meditation, and prayer can positively affect brain chemistry.
- ▶ Charitable organizations and social gatherings can help members avoid isolation and find support in a spiritual community.

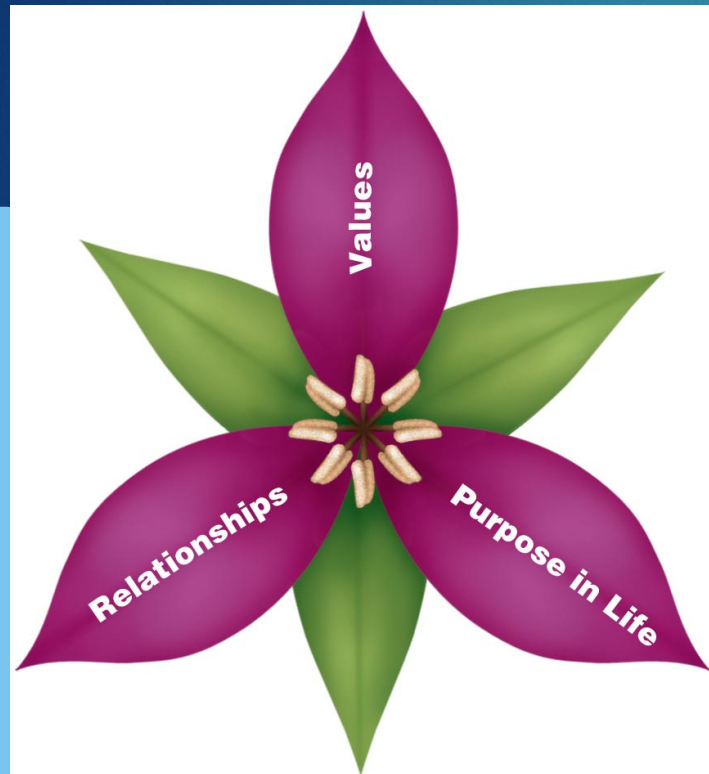
# What Are the Benefits of Focusing on Your Spiritual Health?

## Spiritual Health Contributes to Reduced Stress

- ▶ Stress reduction is one probable mechanism among spiritually healthy people for improved health and longevity, and for coping more effectively with illness.
- ▶ Positive spiritual coping supports effective stress management.
- ▶ Increasing mindfulness through meditation reduces stress levels not only in people with physical and mental disorders, but in healthy people as well.



# Spirituality Integrates Three Facets



- **Healthy relationships**, treating ourselves and others with respect, honesty, integrity, and love, are a sign of spiritual well-being.
- **Values** are our principles—not only the things we say we care about, but also the things that cause us to behave the way we do.
- People who are spiritually healthy are able to articulate their **purpose in life**, and make choices that manifest that purpose.

# What Steps Can You Take to Focus on Your Spiritual Health?



## Mindfulness

- ▶ The ability to be fully present in the moment
- ▶ Living mindfully means making your ordinary moments notable and noteworthy.
- ▶ Pursuing almost any endeavor that requires close concentration can help develop mindfulness.
- ▶ Cultivate mindfulness by paying attention to how our choices affect our world.



# What Steps Can You Take to Focus on Your Spiritual Health?

## Meditation

- ▶ A practice of emptying the mind, of cultivating stillness
- ▶ The fundamental task is to quiet the mind's noise.
- ▶ Achieving periods of meditative stillness each day enhances spiritual health.
- ▶ Researchers have found that experienced meditators show a significantly increased level of empathy.
- ▶ A recent study found that meditation increased the capacity for forgiveness among college students.
- ▶ Meditation improves the brain's ability to process information, reduces stress, improves sleep, and relieves chronic pain.

# What Steps Can You Take to Focus on Your Spiritual Health?

## Prayer

- ▶ An individual focuses the mind in communication with a transcendent presence.
- ▶ For many, prayer begins with **adoration** (praise).
- ▶ Adoration is often followed by **petition and intercession** (sharing concerns and promising to be open to guidance).
- ▶ Prayer traditionally concludes with **thanksgiving** (expression of gratitude).



# FAITH

- ▶ To believe that (someone or something) deserves to be trusted
- ▶ Faith is essential in recovery.
- ▶ Believing that you can and will overcome is vital.
- ▶ Having faith allows individuals to press forward and continue on through setbacks, relapses and opposition.
- ▶ When you have faith and believe in yourself, not only will you empower yourself in recovery, but that positive belief may strengthen others around you.
- ▶ Having the support of other positive people in your life can help your recovery as well.

# HOPE

- ▶ **Hope** is an optimistic attitude of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes.
- ▶ Having hope is also essential in recovery.
- ▶ Hope can translate into the desire to overcome all obstacles including mental health challenges.
- ▶ Hope can fuel recovery when your resolve is waning.
- ▶ Hope is the light at the end of the tunnel.
- ▶ Staying focused on that light-no matter how small or dim it becomes.
- ▶ Hope can help propel recovery in a positive forward direction.



# LOVE

- ▶ Learning to love and accept oneself for who you are can allow for recovery to happen.
- ▶ Acceptance requires love- love for oneself and others.
- ▶ Learning to love and accept others for who they are ignites forgiveness and dissolves blame.
- ▶ Love truly can heal and healing is a necessary part of recovery.

# Spiritual Fortitude

- ▶ Is a confidence that someone has sufficient spiritual resources to face, and grow in the face of, a stressor.
- ▶ SF reflects a spiritual depth and capacity for authentic spiritual engagement in the wake of hardship.
- ▶ SF is likely a multifaceted construct, including not only confidence in one's resources, but the perceived functionality and suitability of such spiritual resources as they operate in periods of considerable strain.
- ▶ It involves having spiritual endurance (withstanding and persevering in difficult times), spiritual enterprise (maintaining integrity during adversity), and the hope for finding a renewed sense of purpose and meaning following the adversity.



# Resilience

- ▶ Resilience is conceptualized as a return to a normal state of functioning, perhaps after a stressor or trauma; in other words, resilience represents a homeostatic rebounding to a prior level of functioning.
- ▶ Case Study

# Spiritual Wellness cont'd

- ▶ *Forgiveness and Healing*
- ▶ *Spirituality and what makes us special*
- ▶ *Developing your own spirituality wellness plan*

*annetalleggrand@gmail.com*  
*anne.Talleggrand@nychhc.org*

*Thank you!*