

HANDOUT 5.1

Spiritual–Religious Beliefs

The following spiritual–religious concepts may be meaningful and relevant to you.

We are never alone.

- “No matter how bad it gets, I am never alone.”
- “Faith has no boundaries.”
- “Wherever I am, God remains with me.”
- “I am not the first person to ever go through this and I won’t be the last.”
- “God is always close by, even when I feel distant.”

Nothing is impossible.

- “The truth is that I don’t *really* know what will happen in the end.”
- “Miracles *can* and *do* happen.”
- “Even when danger is imminent, I may remain hopeful by trusting in God.”
- “Help can come as swiftly as the blink of an eye.”
- “Just as something can be taken away, so too can it be given back.”

Life is a test.

- “Struggle makes us stronger.”
- “The harder it gets, the greater opportunity I have to grow.”
- “Faithfulness can be demonstrated best in difficult situations.”
- “This is just a test, one that I can pass if I put my mind to it.”
- “Suffering cannot completely take away my freedom of choice.”

We can only control the process, not the outcome.

- “Regardless of the outcome, I am never a failure if I give it my all.”
- “God only wants me to try my best, nothing more and nothing less.”
- “My difficulties may not go away, but I can learn to handle them better.”
- “My task is not to solve my problem, but to get through it without making it worse.”
- “Life changes from day to day, but I can improve my moment to moment.”

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Everything happens for a reason.

- “There is meaning, I just have to search for it.”
- “The universe is not out to get me.”
- “Everything is for the best.”
- “My difficulties are a gift; they are an opportunity for my faith in God to grow.”
- “Even when life is difficult, it never ceases to have meaning.”

Nothing is permanent.

- “There are good days, and then there are bad days.”
- “The only sure thing in life is that it’s not going to last forever.”
- “This too shall pass.”
- “My problems cannot and will not last forever.”
- “I have persevered through worse situations in the past.”

HANDOUT 5.2

Spiritual–Religious Coping in Treatment

Many people draw upon spiritual or religious beliefs, attitudes, or practices to reduce emotional stress, since this domain can give meaning to suffering and make it more bearable. Here are some examples of spiritual or religious activities that you may wish to integrate into your treatment.

Prayer

Prayer involves speaking from the heart to one's Higher Power. Prayer can be formal and structured or spontaneous. Here are four types of prayer: (1) Thanks—“Thank you for the sandwich I had for lunch today”; (2) Praise—“It's amazing how many types of apples there are”; (3) Conversation—“I feel really angry right now that I got a speeding ticket!”; (4) Request—“Please help me to get to my appointment on time.”

Meditate on a Coping Statement

Choose an inspiring quotation that is personally meaningful and write it on an index card, then repeat it to yourself throughout the day.

Seek Religious Support

Speak to your clergy, family, or friends about spirituality and religion.

S-R Study

Read passages from the Bible or other holy texts or listen to classes on a CD or MP3.

Forgiveness

Try to forgive those who have wronged you in the past. Think about what they have done to you, and find the strength to let go of the hurt you feel in your heart.

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Good Deeds

Perform good deeds by helping others in need.

Religious Framing

Think about what your faith might have to say about the problems you are now facing.

Count your Blessings

Think about three things you are grateful for each day.

Finding the Meaning

Focus on something that is meaningful and important to you, despite your suffering.

HANDOUT 5.3

Meditating on the Psalms

When you are looking for hope, comfort, and encouragement, the Biblical book of Psalms is full of ancient words of wisdom. Some people pray the Psalms regularly, while others memorize a few verses for times when they need an infusion of faith. The following may be relevant to you:

Psalm 34 (34:18) – The Lord Helps the Brokenhearted

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 23 (23:4) – The Valley of the Shadow of Death

Even though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me.

Psalm 32 (32:7) – You Will Protect Me

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 31 (31:2) – Turn Your Ear to Me

Turn your ear to me; come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.

Psalm 91 (91:4) – His Faithfulness Will Be Your Shield

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

Psalm 55 (55:22) – Cast Your Cares on the Lord

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Psalm 46 (46:1) – God Is Our Refuge

God is our refuge and strength—an ever-present help in trouble.

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Psalm 43 (43:5-6) – Put Your Hope in God

Why are you downcast, all my soul? Why so disturbed within me. Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 68 (68:19) – He Bears Our Burdens

Praise be to the Lord, to God Our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.

Psalm 18 (18:2) – The Lord Is My Rock

The Lord is my Rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalm 34 (34:8) – The Lord Is Good

Taste and See that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Psalm 34 (34:24) – Take Heart

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.

Psalm 73 (73:26) – God Is My Strength

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

Psalm 29 (29:11) – The Lord Blesses His People

The Lord gives strength to his people; The Lord blesses his people with peace.

Psalm 103 (103: 2-5) – God's Benefits

Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion; who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

Psalm 28 (28:7) – The Lord Is My Strength

The Lord is my strength and my shield: my heart trusts in him, and I am helped; my heart leaps for joy, and I will give thanks to him in song.

HANDOUT 5.4

Spiritual Struggles

Spirituality and religion are often a source of solace, but they can also be a source of strain. The following are examples of spiritual struggles that you may be experiencing, and may wish to discuss with your treatment team.

Intrapersonal Spiritual Struggles

- Excessive religious guilt—Feeling overly blameworthy and responsible for one's sins
- Moral injury—Believing that one has committed morally reprehensible acts
- Religious self-loathing—Deeply resenting oneself for engaging in iniquitous behavior
- Religious burden—Feeling incapable of achieving or attaining a religious standard
- Spiritual constraint—Feeling that one's physicality is a barrier to achieving spirituality

Interpersonal Spiritual Struggles

- Faith community rejection—Feeling excluded or ignored by one's religious community
- Creating religious boundaries—Avoiding or ignoring clergy or faith community members
- Counterfeit religiosity—Feeling that others are religiously inauthentic
- Religious betrayal or harm—Feeling deceived, wronged, or hurt by religious individuals
- Religious disagreement—Not seeing eye-to-eye with religious leadership or teachings
- Lack of religious support—Feeling unsupported by clergy or faith community
- Social-religious dissatisfaction—Feeling disgruntled or disappointed with religious leaders or fellow community members

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Divine Spiritual Struggles

- Anger toward God—Feelings of antagonism and/or resentment toward the Divine
- Demonic appraisals—Believing that the devil is responsible for one's situation
- Passive religious deferral—Expecting God to solve one's problems without exerting any personal effort
- Punishment appraisals—Feeling punished or cursed by the Divine
- Reappraisals of God—Feeling that God has limits and cannot provide assistance
- Spiritual discontent—Feeling abandoned or unloved by God