

Guidelines for Helping Persons Experience Their Own Spirituality

1. Know yourself as a spiritual being. What gives your life meaning? What is especially frightening?
2. Remember that being aware of the presence of God does not depend on being able to define or describe God.
3. Remember that each person is the expert about one's own path. It is then that we can explore their uniqueness.
4. Understand spiritual assessment as an ongoing process within the context of a relationship.
5. Be aware that the need to be with and to bear painful feelings is as significant and important as the need to do and to do for persons experiencing spiritual distress.
6. Help the person and yourself find goals, hope, and pleasure for the present moment.
7. Encourage reminiscing and share in life review, a process during which persons remember and often resolve or understand old pain and conflicts from a new perspective.
8. Allow persons to grieve for themselves and those around them.
9. Know that by being present we can decrease the separation and aloneness which persons often fear.
10. Remember and know that you are helping a person toward wholeness – in the moment – now – even when pain and limitation are part of the moment.

Source: Reprinted from "Deal with Spiritual Concerns of Clients in the Community" by M. Burkhardt and M.G. Nagai-Jacobson, American Holistic Nurses' Association Annual Conference, June 1987.