UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL PAIN IN PEOPLE

Understanding the concept of spiritual pain will assist clinicians to really listen to hurting people by building person-centered relationships with residents, family members and staff. In this presentation the listener will...

- Develop an understanding of what causes spiritual pain in people
- Learn to use clinical language to categorize spiritual pain
- Formulate a structure to assess severity of spiritual pain
- Discover a purpose to utilize the tactics and skills of deep listening

Causes of Spiritual Pain in People

- **Broken/Lost Relationships** (family, work, community...)
- **Loss of Meaning/Purpose/Activity** (work, self-care, self-identity, self-significance)
- **Regrets/Forgiveness/Remorse/Shame** (to be restored/forgiven and extend forgiveness)
- **Hopelessness/Futility** (giving up due to severity of spiritual pain)

Categorizing Spiritual Pain in People

(based on Spiritual Health Assessment at www.sacredartofliving.org)

- **RELATEDNESS PAIN** - 'I have great support from my family' / 'My family has forgotten me'
- **MEANING PAIN** - 'My life has meaning – even in illness' / 'My life now has no purpose'
- **FORGIVENESS PAIN** - 'I don’t have any regrets' / 'My life is full of regret'
- **HOPELESSNESS PAIN** – 'I want to enjoy the life I have left' / 'I just want to lie here and die'

Assessing Spiritual Pain in People

- Spiritual pain is an aspect of a person’s TOTAL PAIN
- Observation and Deep Listening is required to accurately assess spiritual pain
  - If a person reports no physical pain, but you observe them wincing when they move, you can deduce they are not accurately reporting the physical pain they feel
  - We have all said at one time or another, 'I am fine...' when we are really NOT fine!
- Examples of HIDDEN spiritual pain...
  - You observe a visit from a resident’s family and afterward see the person crying...
  - You observe an angry outburst for no apparent reason...
  - You observe lethargy and lack of interest or energy in a resident

Healing Spiritual Pain in People

- You have to be Authentic/Genuine... Be yourself! Be Present! Be available!
- You are the medicine... Empowering people to talk helps decrease their spiritual pain.
- Talk to resident’s family and friends to offer support
- Make a referral to a chaplain / spiritual care provider / local minister
- Don’t get overwhelmed by trying to carry the burdens of others
This website is designed to help you find solutions to problems causing you emotional distress.

Welcome to the Coping Engine. The coping circles will help you find solutions to problems that are causing you emotional distress. Sometimes all we know is that we feel upset, "out of control." This is not comfortable and we do not want those feelings to last. Here, is a tool to start feeling better today. Take these steps to face your emotions, manage your fear, and move towards choices that will help you feel better, and direct you towards solutions to the underlying problem.