

## Addressing Spiritual Needs: In Psychiatric Care

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### ABSTRACT

Spirituality can play an important role in helping people live with or recover from mental health problems more and more people now understand that our wellbeing depends on a mix of factors including biological, psychological and social factors. Taking account of people's spiritual beliefs is therefore an important part of viewing people's mental health in the round. Spirituality can help people maintain good mental health. It can help them cope with everyday stress and can keep them grounded. There is some evidence of links between spirituality and improvement in people's mental health.

**Keywords:** *Spirituality, Mental Health, Wellbeing, Stress.*

To be healthy means to be whole and to be whole has a spiritual quality to it. Spirituality is that part of us that deals with relationships and values and addresses questions of purpose and meaning in life. Spirituality unites people and is inclusive in nature, not exclusive. Although spirituality is not a religion being involved in a particular religion is a way, some people may enhance their spirituality. Spirituality involves individuals, family, friends and community. The development of our spirituality provides a grounding sense of identity and contributes to our self esteem. Our spiritual health is expressed through honor compassion, with, forgiveness, courage and creativity. Spirituality enables us to develop healthy relationships based on acceptance, respect and compassion. In a broader sense, spiritual problems are related to fear, anger, greed, guilt and worry. These barriers can be described as those duty problems that drain our energy and in a oblige us. Left unresolved, they can prevent our development as healthy, spiritual beings (Lauver 2000).

The spiritual component is the feeling of being connected between you and the client. It is that inner sense of being a part of something more than you. It is respect for the clients' cultural values and religious views. Person's spirit is what allows us to connect to them for to express important spiritual needs, such as the need for meaning in life, belief in god, or belief from fear,

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doubt, or loneliness. The important point is to recognize that spiritual needs are as diverse as our clients their cultures and their illness.

### **Spirituality and Religions:**

Despite millennia of debate, there are little concerns about the meanings of spirituality and religion. These terms often are used interchangeably; however, there are important differences.

The word 'spirituality' comes from the Latin word 'spiritualitas' (breath). It refers to a persons or a group's relationship with the transcendent. It has also been characterized as an experiential process whose features include question for meaning and purpose, transcendence (i.e the sense that being human is more than spiritual material existence), connectedness (eg. with others, nature or the divine) and values (eg. Love compassion and justice).

The word 'religion' comes from Latin 'religare' (to bind together). Religion is a set of beliefs, practices and languages that characterizes a community that is searching for transcendent meaning in a particular way, generally based upon belief in a duty. It appears that compared to religious that compared to religion; spirituality is a broader concept most institutionalized religious in to foster spirituality. It is also important to remember that religiosity and spirituality are not mutually exclusive concepts and therefore they can overlap and also exist separately.

Spirituality defines as been described as a person's experiences of or belief in, a power apart from his or her own existence. It also has been described or an individual search for meaning (Bown and Williams, 1995). Religion is the outward practice of a spiritual system of beliefs, values, codes of conduct and spirituals (Spack 1998). Religion serves as a platform for the expression of spirituality through an organized system of practices and beliefs. Spirituality is a distinctive, potentially creative and universal dimension of human experience arising both within the inner subjective awareness of individuals and with in communities, social groups and traditions.

It may be experienced as relationship with that which is initially inner immanent and personal, with in the self and others, and or as relationship with that which is wholly other transcendent and beyond the self. It is experienced being of fundamental or ultimate importance and is thus concerned with matters a of meaning and purpose in life, truth and values.

The word religion has the some root us ligament and ligature. It is that grounding of faith and basis of life to which I regard myself as being connected, such as a maintainer might used, that ties one to God and to other believes.

In everyday conversation, spirituality has come to mean almost the same as religion but is more politically correct as it involves also those people in our society show have no religious affiliation. Jonathan sacks, the chief Rabbi wrote spirituality changes our life.

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### **Importance of spirituality and religion in India:**

One of the things that are most striking about India's culture is the way in which the holy, the spiritual and the everyday are so intrinsically linked for the locals. Religion is abundant in all of which are deeply embedded into the everyday life of the respective disciples of each religion.

Religion in India is the foundation for most areas of life for individuals and families. More than 80% of Indians are Hindus and over 13% are Muslims, India is the birth place of Buddhism and at one time less than 1% of the population follows Buddha. Christians and Sikhs have about 2% followers each.

India is a land where spirituality is almost a way of life; where an even illiterate farmer or housewife will surprise one with their philosophical issue of life.

India is a country which is associated with spiritual traditions for thousands of years; which has been home of some of the greatest religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism.

In India many of the notions of life and wellbeing were formulated during back to approximately 300 BC. Nature of wellbeing (mental health) is understood solely with references to nityaniti, Viveka and we have many concepts, which are context specific in meaning and represent various aspects and dimensions of wellbeing. They include *bog sukha*, *santhasha*, *harsha*, *ullas*, *ananda*, *trupti*, *shrushti*, *shubha*, *mangala*, *kalyana*, *shreyas*, *preyas*, *shanti*, *arogya*, *swasthya*, *sthitaprajnata* and many more which are commonly found in classical Sanskrit texts as well as in other Indian languages derived from it.

Indian traditions recognize in two aspects of spirituality (a) experiencing paranormal and supernatural phenomenon and (b) leading a value oriented life with in Indian tradition the former is referred to as *anubhuti* and *vibhuthi* and the latter as *dharma* in its all encompassing sense.

The emphasis on balance or equilibrium is very close to the concept of health in various Indian texts. The related illustrations include Ayurveda (the concept of *sama* or balance), *Ati sarvatra varjayeet* or avoidance of extremes, Buddhist philosophy (*madhyama* or the middle path), or the *sankhya* philosophy the state of *sanyastha* (equilibrium) of three *gunas* or qualities namely *sattva* (the element of illumination), *rajas* (activity, dynamism and famous (passivity, inertia, darkness), such as a balanced state of functioning is repeatedly considered in *Bhagvatgeeta* to be chief characteristics of psychological well being (mental health) of person. It says that one should remain balanced both in happiness and sorrow on profit and loss and victory and defeat.

The essence of psychotherapy has been present in all traditional societies all along. In India it has existed in a submerged form, interweaver with social structures, social norms, myths and ritual. It has been included in mysticism in yoga, in Buddhism, in Ayurveda, in Unani tradition and in allopathic tradition. *Mahabharata* is a great text book of psychopathology and *Gita* a great

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treatise in psychotherapy. Bhagavad Gita describes various aspects of psychotherapeutic techniques through 18 chapters of self knowledge. Geeta frees person from guilt sense in its own frame work, resolves repression, supplies energy and morale by making person dig deeper still in his own self and develop insight in to its working model of psychotherapy which will widely be accepted in Indian patients could be found in traditional concept of relationship between a guru and chela.

### **Spirituality and religion on mental health:**

Spirituality, religion, health and medicine have common roots in the conceptual frame work of relationship amongst human beings, nature and God, of late; there has been a surge in interest in understanding the interplay of religion spirituality, health and medicine both in popular and scientific literature. A number of published empirical studies suggest that religions involvement is associated with better outcomes in physical and mental health.

More than 850 studies have examined the relationship between religious involvement and various aspects of mental health. Most have shown that religions people experience better psychological functioning and adapt more successfully to stress. The relationship between religious commitment and positive mental health is particularly referring among older adults.

Nothing in life is more wonderful than faith. The one great having force which we can neither weigh in the balance nor test in the crucible faith has always been an essential factor in the practice of medicine. The world health organization (WHO) has accepted spirituality as an important aspect of quality of life understanding the implications and consequences of incorporating religion and spirituality into health and medicine. In the Indian context needs a thoughtful, critical and open minded inquiry.

Although there are plenty of studies reporting relationships between religious involvement and mental health, they rarely investigated the potential mediators of this relationship. Several mechanisms have been proposed to explain the influence of religion on human health. Healthy behaviors and life styles are causes for several illnesses, which are we eat, drink, drive our automobile, sex, smoke etc. Most spiritual and religious practices prescribe or prohibit behaviour that may impact on health. Social support can promote health; religious might provide social cohesion, the sense of belonging to a caring group, continuity in relationships with friends and family and other support group.

Belief system, cognitive frame work influence on how people deal with stress, suffering and life problems. Religious beliefs can provide support through the following ways. Enhancing acceptance, endurance and resilience. They generate peace, self-confidence, purpose, forgiveness to the individuals own failures, self-giving and positive self image. Locus of control is an expression that arises from the social learning theory and tries to understand why people deal in different ways facing the some problem.

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Some of the research exploring the association between spirituality and in mental health attempts to understand the mechanisms through which potential benefits may occur. The interventions of a divine being or God, other factors may explain and account for those effects. Mechanisms most often discussed are: 1)  **coping styles:** Religious has been conceptualized as mediator to account for the relationship between spirituality and mental health, particularly in times of stress. Many researchers suggest that a person's relationship with a divine or imagined other can have a major impact on their coping abilities. 2)  **Locus of control/attributions:** In internal locus of control wherein an individual believes that they have some power over a given outcome is usually associated with better mental health than an external locus of control. 3)  **Social support:** The individual drive from the members, leaders and clergy of religious congregations is widely considered one the keep mediators between spirituality and mental health. Social isolation providing and strengthening family and social networks, providing individual with a sense of belonging spiritual support in times of adversity. 4)  **Physiological impact:** Some researchers have argued that certain expressions or elements of spirituality may positively affect various physiological mechanisms involved in health, emotions encouraged in many spiritual traditions, including hope, contentment, love and forgiveness, may serve the individual by affecting the endocrine and immune systems. 5)  **Architecture and the built environment:** The relationship between spirituality and mental health is the environment. Many people find spiritual expressions through outdoor pursuits such as temples, churches, mosques etc.

### **Spirituality and Religion on Mental illness:**

Spirituality help people to deal with mental illness spirituality can bring a feeling connected to something bigger than yourself and it can provide a way of coping in addition to relying on your own mental resilience. It can help service users make sense of what they are experiencing. We think that if you have got an inner journey that has to be your number one priority in life and believe passionately that we are spiritual beings who are discovering aspects of ourselves that we did not know existed. Having a spiritual life can give strength and improve their well being.

Mental health services have become increasingly interested in addressing the spiritual needs of consumers in recent times, and as a result attempts have been made to redefine the term in a way that would be maximally inclusive so as to apply to people from diverse religious backgrounds and to those with no religion (Kcenig 2008). Many studies have broadened the term to incorporate a wide range of positive psychological concepts such as purpose in life, hopefulness, social connectedness, peacefulness, and well being in general. This becomes problematic for research attempting to assess the relationship between spirituality and mental health because of most definitions good mental health implies that a person has some purpose in life, is hopeful, socially connected and has peace and well being. An earlier study on the personality traits associated with spirituality and religiosity and disorders. (Saucier and skrzypinska 2006). Spirituality in this study was defined as quest for meaning, unity connectedness to nature, humanity, and the transcendent.

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Spirituality, recognized as central to mental health from ancient times, has re-aimed so in many non-western and indigenous traditions, while this knowledge has been substantially lost in the west in recent centuries; modern western psychiatry is a secular discipline that applies scientific methodology to clinical questions. Whilst relatively few psychologists or psychiatrists have integrated a spiritual perspective into their work.

(Rumbold 2002) suggests that spirituality is an emerging theme in the professional and academic literatures of business, education, and health care, as well as in the curricula of training institutions. Patients who believe God may experience better short term treatment for psychiatric illness, according to many studies.

Individuals who described themselves as having strong faith reported having a better overall response to treatment, said David Rosmarin a clinician and instructor in the department of psychiatry at Harvard school in Boston. They found that patients who had better well being, less depression and less anxiety. There is a substantial body of experience and slowly growing research that supports the use of spiritual values and or religion and relation to mental health issues. The recovery movement recognizes spirituality as one of the key elements in recovery. Multiple surveys have reported a correction of low alcohol use with regular church attendance (NAMI 2011).

Religious issues are important in assessment and treatment of patients and therefore clinicians need to be open to the effect of religion on the effect of religion on their patients' mental health.

### **Religion and spiritual interventions in psychiatric care:**

Spirituality can play an important role in helping people live with or recover from mental health problems. Spirituality can help people maintain good mental health. It can help them to cope with every day stress and can keep them grounded. Tolerant and inclusive spiritual communities can provide valuable support and friendship. There is some evidence of links between spirituality and improvements in people's mental health, although researchers do not know exactly how this works.

On assessment of the spiritual needs must be considered as human rights. A mental health services culture that responds to spiritual needs by acknowledging the spirituality in people's lives, gives service users and staff opportunities to talk about spirituality, encourages service users to tell staff their needs, help service users to express their spirituality and uses person centered planning and incorporates spiritual needs. However, because research suggests that patients may use religion as a way to cope with illness, ethical practice requires by all the psychiatric care professionals to stay abreast of debate and research findings related to clinically useful interventions, including those of a spiritual nature. Professional organizations, including the American psychological association, the accreditation council of graduate medical education, the council on social work education, the academy of family physicians, the joint commission,

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and commission on accreditation of rehabilitation facilities, have all mandated that clinicians be able to recognize, respect, and address the spiritual issues of clients (JCAHO, 2004).

**Clarifying the values:** Values are ideals or beliefs of importance to people that greatly determine how they act and behave. Family back ground, peer interaction throughout the lifespan, and secular and religious education influence values and ways of thinking values help people make decisions and influence behaviour. Clarifying values helps mental health professionals discover what they believe and what matters to them. It also involves becoming conscious of what clients regard as important and how such priorities might influence their attitudes and behaviors in clinical settings. When working with clients health care providers must become aware of their own personal values, their clients values and the differences between them.

Self-awareness allows health care providers to act from their own spiritual or cultural perspectives, while taking care not to impose these values on others.

Clergy, although not traditionally members of interdisciplinary treatment teams, can give needed support to clinicians, providing a context for and insight into the lives and world views of clients. Many clients turn to clergy for help, and some consider their clergy to be their primary mental health care provider.

Health care providers are encouraged to build collaborative relationships with clergy and chaplains to learn more about spiritual interventions and the rich diversity of spiritual and religions views. They are encouraged to invite clergy to consult and to be members of client's treatment teams.

**Spiritual assessment:** Acknowledging the spiritual lives of clients may involves asking about that aspect when taking a health history. Ask open ended questions about faith and spirituality, importance of spirituality etc. The religious interventions more denominational, external, cognitive, ritualistic and public and spiritual interventions more economical cross cultural, internal, affective, transcendent and experimental.

Spiritual assessment includes the following questions together the spiritual tasks of the patient include: 1) What is strength for you? 2) Where can you get your strength? 3).Who gives you strength? 4). How can you increase your strength? 5). What does peace means to you? 6). Where do you feel at peace? 7).Who makes you more peaceful? 8). What situations increase you sense of peace? 9). When do you feel most secure? 10). Where do you get your security from? 11). Who makes you feel secure? 12). How can you increase your security? Finally the health care providers should be writing and able to address their clients' spiritual needs.

A number of organizations and agencies encourage the incorporation of spiritual practices into health care.

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**Prayer:** Prayer can be a powerful form of coping that helps people physically and mentally. Prayer is a kind of communications or conversation with a power that clients recognize as divine. All western theistic religions and several eastern traditions, eg. Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Toa etc practice prayer, although the form and content may vary for each. Different kinds of prayer i.e group verses solitary may have different effects well-being and satisfaction.

**Bibliotherapy with sacred writings:** Bibliotherapy involves the use of literature to help clients gain insight into feelings and behaviour and learn new ways to cope with difficulties. It is a process of interaction between the personality of the reader and the literature, which may be used for personality assessment, adjustment or growth. The stories and narratives in these writing can provide solace and inspiration for clients.

**Contemplation and medication:** contemplation and medication are mental exercises that involve calmly limiting thoughts and attention. Meditative traditions include Zen, Vipassana, Visualization, Transcendental and Devotional. Many forms of contemplation and meditation have their origins in eastern traditions, most notable Hinduism and Buddhism. All forms involve isolation from distracting environmental noise, active focusing or repetition of thoughts or a word (mantra), muscle relaxation, release and surrender of control.

**Repentance and forgiveness:** all major theistic religions teach that people should forgive those who have harmed them and seek forgiveness from those whom they have harmed. Repentance and forgiveness are acts with important spiritual consequences; in addition, clients themselves may associate personal growth with admitting and making restriction for short coming and feelings.

**Worship and rituals:** all major religions encourage their followers to engage in private and public acts of worship. Worship is the devotion accorded to a higher power or deity, and rituals are the ceremonies, rites or acts such as prayer, singing hymns; fasting or abstaining from food, water, or sex; and partaking of sacramental emblems. Acts of worship and ritual serve to express people devotion to a deity. They facilitate their commitment or recommitment to a spiritual or moral life. Offer penitence, offer settings and opportunities for solidarity with others and provide for spiritual enlightenment. (Smart. 2000)

Benson suggests that worship services are full of potentially therapeutic elements such as music, aesthetic surroundings, familiar rituals, distraction from everyday tension, prayer and contemplation, and opportunities for socializing and fellowship with others.

Professional services providers should be carefully about participating with clients in worship or rituals because of potential confusion over role boundaries (Richard & Bergin 2005).

### **Fellowship and altruistic services:**

The basic need for mutual support and connection with others is universal among humans. All religions encourage fellowship and provide opportunities for its expression and fulfillment.



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Altruistic services can take much form, such as providing emotional support to discouraged people, taking cloths or food to needy, or visiting the sick. Fellowship and altruism provide ways to reduce alienation and self preoccupation and may be particularly helpful for clients who are socially isolated, lonely, depressed, suicidal or experiencing major life crisis.

**Journal writing:** Encourage to clients keep journals concerning their spiritual struggles, insights, and experiences.

### **Ethical formalities in spiritual interventions:**

Some professionals have raised ethical concerns. They are in positions of great influence with respect to clients.

Inquires into a client's spiritual life with the intent of making recommendations the link religious practice with better health outcomes may repressed such a departure.

A second ethical consideration involves the limits of current research. As mentioned findings related to the effects of religious or spiritual factors on health have been inconclusive, largely because of related to research design, construct and methodology. Professionals must take care not to misrepresent the state of research; test suggestible clients abandon allopathic treatment for spiritual interventions to the determent of their health.

A third ethical consideration has to do with the danger of imposing one's own values on clients.

Another ethical consideration is that clinicians should pursue religious or spiritual goals and interventions only when clients have expressed explicitly their desire for them. They also recommended that clinicians using spiritual or religious interventions should always obtain informed consent from clients. A final ethical pitfall involves the possibility of violating work setting binderies. Professionals who work in civic settings should be adhere to work settings policies regarding then separation religion and clients civic policies.

## **CONCLUSION**

Spirituality can help people deal with periods of mental distress or mental illness. Spirituality can bring a feeling of being connected to something bigger than yourself and it can provide a way of coping in addition to relying on your own mental resilience. It can help service users make sense of what they are experiencing spirituality is often overlooked by the staff working in mental health services. This sees mental health problems as caused by biological factors, leaving little room for spirituality and other important areas of people's lives. It is not helpful to dismiss or ignore the spiritual needs of service users. Taking then into account can support their path to recovery or help than live with their mental health problems in the best way for than as individuals.

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Encouraging service users to explore what is important to them spirituality can be a valuable self help strategy. People often want to talk about their spirituality and listening to what they say shows respect for their beliefs.

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The author declared no conflict of interests.

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