



Advanced Spiritual Care brings you ongoing training for body and spirit that sets apart the specialty practice of faith community nursing.

Sharon Hinton, author of *Advanced Spiritual Care*, launched this valuable resource during workshops on Westberg on the Road.

topics in Faith Community Nursing

Advanced Spiritual Care

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Religion and spirituality—are they the same thing? What is the best spiritual care assessment tool? What are some of the obstacles to providing spiritual care, and what’s the best way around them? Ongoing training to care for the spirit as well as the body sets apart the professional specialty of faith community nursing. *Advanced Spiritual Care* examines the nuances of the language and practice of spiritual care, along with instilling intentionality for cultivating the disciplines of healing spiritual care.

Advanced Spiritual Care includes:

- intentional disciplines for healing spiritual care
- wisdom for personal practice for caregivers
- practical assessments for care receivers
- reflective and interactive learning for groups and individuals
- content that meet standards for CEU credit

Spiritual Care

The literature tells us that there is no agreed-on definition of *spiritual care* in nursing. A more complete understanding emerges by examining several definitions.

The glossary of *Scope and Standards of Practice: Faith Community Nursing* (2nd edition, 2012) defines spiritual care as, “The practical expression of presence, guidance, and interventions, individual and communal, to support, nurture, or encourage an individual’s or group’s ability to achieve wholeness; health; personal, spiritual, and social well-being; integration of body, mind, and spirit; and a sense of connection to self, others, and a higher power.”

Tove Giske and Pamela Cone, in their article, “Discerning the Healing Path—How Nurses Assist Patient Spirituality in Diverse Healthcare Settings (*Journal of Clinical Nursing*, July 2015), wrote, “Diversity in spiritual expression underlines the need for a trusting relationship and posits that the nurse should allow him/herself to be taken on a journey decided by the other.”

A third perspective comes from the National Health Service Education for Scotland in a publication titled, *Spiritual Care Matters: An Introductory Resource for all NHS Scotland Staff* (2010), which says, “Spiritual care is care, which recognizes and responds to the needs of the human spirit when faced with trauma, ill health, or sadness and can include the need for meaning, for self-worth, to express oneself, for faith support, perhaps for rites or prayer or sacrament, or simply for a sensitive listener. Spiritual care begins with encouraging the human contact in compassionate relationship, and moves it whatever direction need requires.”

While there is no one formal definition, aspects of spiritual care that emerge from these three perspectives and more include:

- trusting relationship
- willingness to walk with another without controlling the destination
- sensitive listening
- compassion
- relationship
- caring attitude
- appropriate referrals
- self-reflection
- being present
- connectedness
- hope
- kindness
- openness
- silence

The aspects of spiritual care are best described by a term found in psychological and theological literature that is not commonly used in nursing literature, but it is a relevant concept: spiritual literacy. *Spiritual literacy* is a hallmark of faith community nursing practice. It is a blending of nursing science, faith, wisdom, and clinical experience. It helps with the question, “How do I find meaning in the experiences my life holds right now?” Spiritual literacy is the ability to recognize the divine in self, others, and our experiences. It is an intuition much like the nursing intuition we all have learned to trust over time. To become spiritually literate, a nurse must continually strive to develop nursing skills and expertise while growing in faith and the understanding of how to care wholistically for others by experiencing and providing care.

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