

Spirituality

What is spirituality?

Spirituality is not easy to define. It can mean different things for different people. But for many people, spirituality is a feeling of connection to something “larger” than they are. Some explain it as a personal relationship with a “higher power” or “life source.”

Spirituality and religion are not the same. Religion may be defined as a specific set of beliefs and practices. It is usually in connection with an organized group. Spirituality can be expressed through religion, but it can also be expressed in many other ways. Some people feel spiritual when they are surrounded by nature or while doing something artistic.

Can spirituality help me through my cancer?

Some research has shown that spiritual beliefs and practices promote positive attitudes that may help a patient feel better. Spirituality may improve quality of life in the following ways:

- Reduce anxiety, depression and discomfort
- Reduce sense of isolation (feeling alone)
- Better adjustment to the effects of cancer and its treatment
- Increased ability to enjoy life during cancer treatment
- A feeling of personal growth as a result of living with cancer
- Improve health outcomes

How can I find my spiritual side?

All humans are spiritual beings. It is how we express our spirituality that differs. If you are unsure about the source of your spirituality, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who or what is most important in my life?
- Who or what brings joy to my life?
- What is it that gets me through the difficult times in my life?

Patient Education

There are several things you can do to help develop your spirituality:

1. **Spend time each day in silence and thought.**

Setting aside quiet time each day can help you find your source of spirituality. Try journaling, meditation, prayer or reflection. Think about the day's events. Which events added meaning to your life? Which events were draining?

2. **Develop and maintain meaningful relationships.**

Meaningful connection with others is important in developing your spirituality. Relationships give you a chance to practice your spiritual beliefs. Do you treat others as you want to be treated? Do you trust those with whom you have relationships?

3. **Find a community.**

A spiritual community can provide guidance, support, and help in difficult times. A spiritual community can be any group that is concerned about the big questions in life. The group should care for and support you. You should feel comfortable being yourself and expressing your opinions. Spiritual communities can include church groups, support groups, yoga classes, and spiritual or religious book clubs.